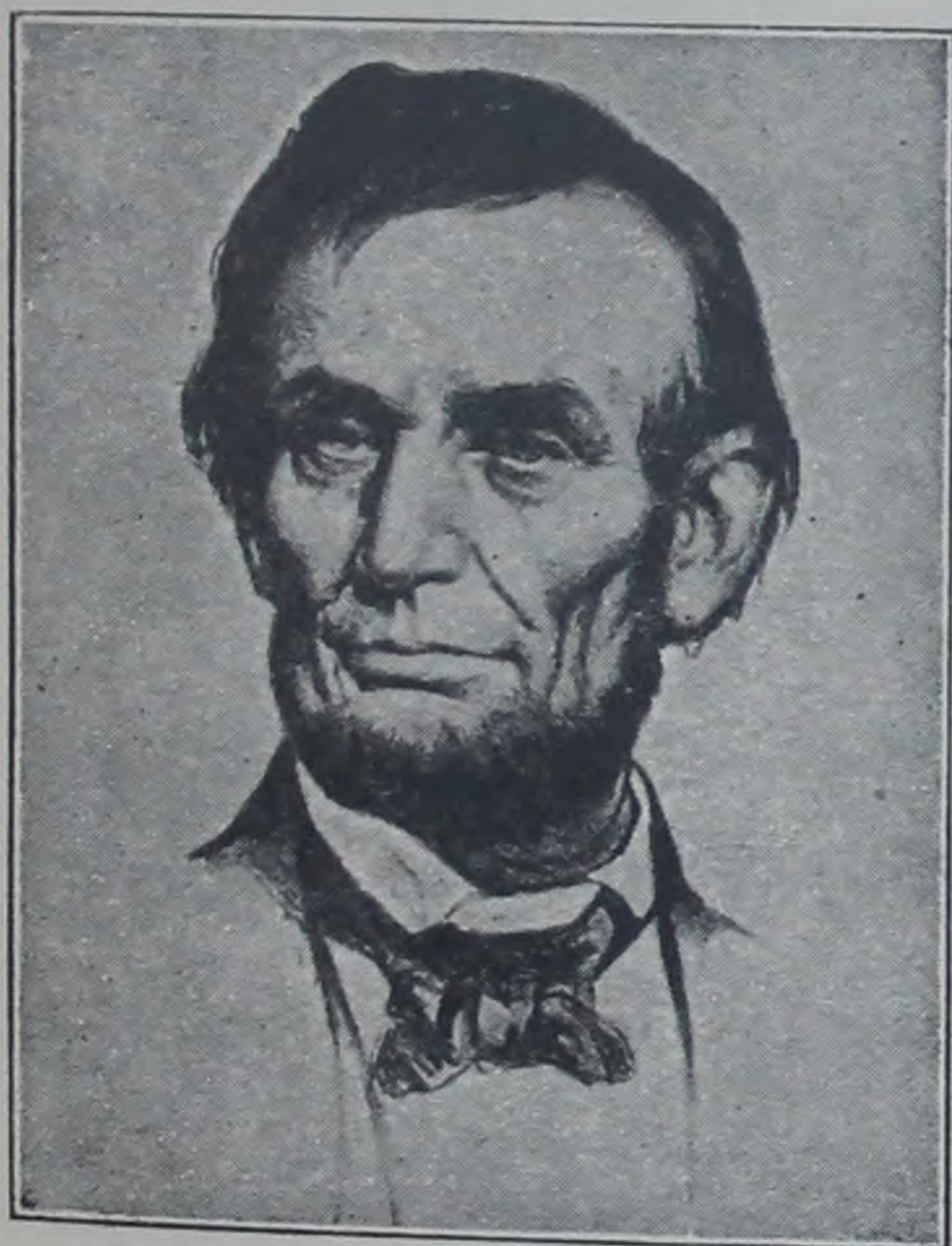


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Annotated Edition

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

a Play by  
JOHN DRINKWATER

With Notes by F. H. W. Spenlow



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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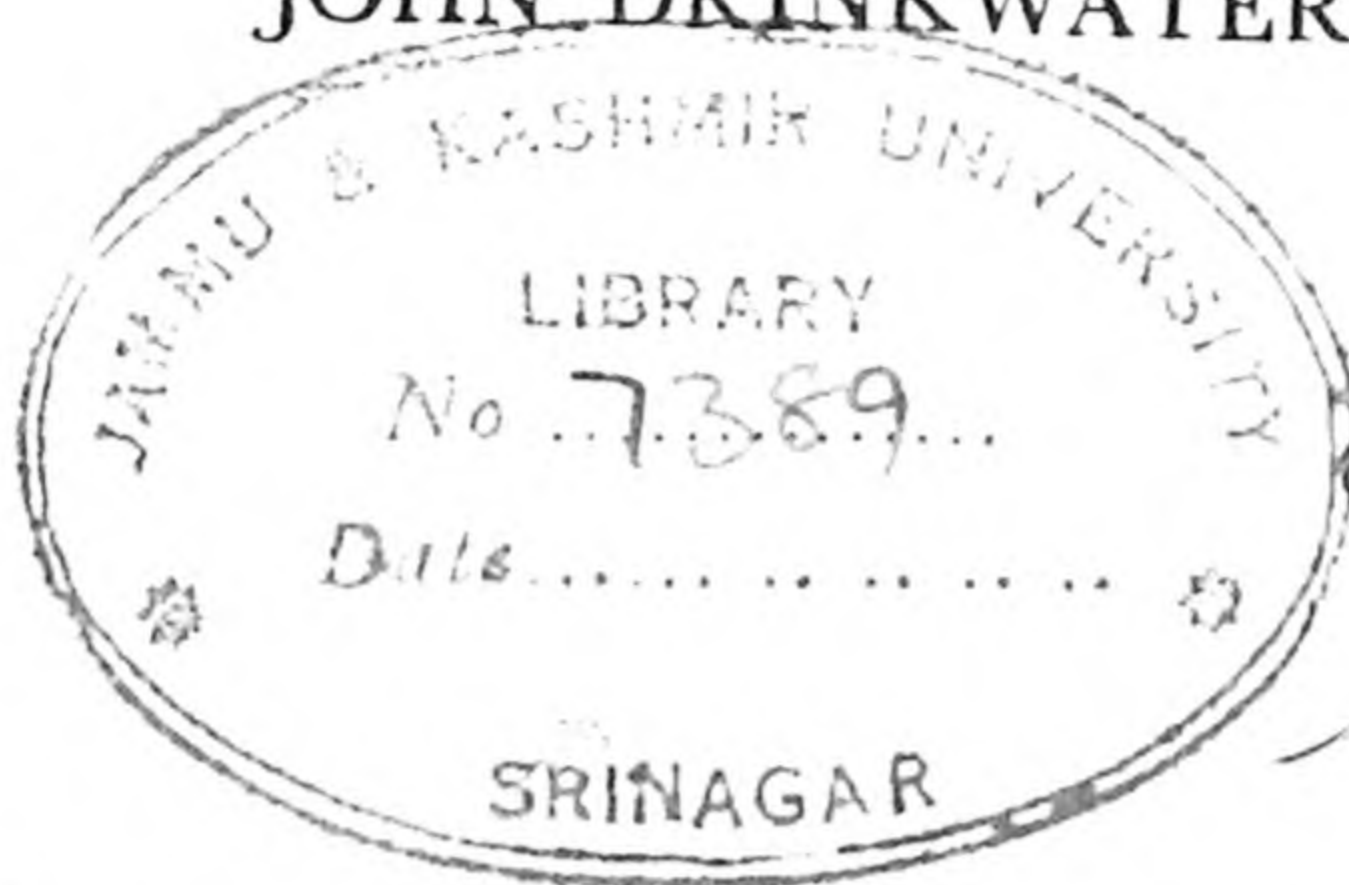
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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

a Play by  
JOHN DRINKWATER

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R61

with Notes by  
F. H. W. SPENLOW

M/L

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR  
SRINAGAR



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## PRELIMINARY NOTE

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, sixteenth President of the United States of America, is inseparably associated with the Civil War, 1861—65, which occupied four of the four and a half years of his Presidency.

The War originated in the difference of attitude towards slavery between the Northern States, where slaves were not employed, and the Southern States, where African negroes had long proved to be more efficient labourers, in the cotton-fields which the climate favours, than white men could be. Though many Southern slave-owners treated their slaves well, the fact remains that even a loved and trusted "nigger" was the slave-owner's property, *saleable*.<sup>1</sup> The growth of humanitarianism, spreading from Europe's abolition of the Slave Trade and taking firm root in the United States (whose Constitution declared "Men are born free and equal in rights"), urged that such ownership of man by man was fundamentally wrong.

But though the slavery question occasioned the War, and though the North's victory over the South brought about the abolition of slavery, LINCOLN's first and greatest principle was that no internal dispute must be allowed to break up the Union. In his view, the Southern States which,<sup>2</sup> in order to maintain their right to keep slaves, proposed to "secede" (break away) from the Union and form a Confederacy of their own, were offending against the nationalism of the American people. To preserve that unity, he would even commit his country to the horrors of civil war.

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe ; *Uncle Remus* by Joel Chandler Harries ; *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain ; and other American world classics.

<sup>2</sup> South Carolina seceded first ; then Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. After the outbreak of the War, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas joined.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

TWO CHRONICLERS.

THE TWO SPEAKING TOGETHER. Kinsmen, you shall  
behold

Our stage, in mimic action, mould  
A man's character.

This is the wonder, always, everywhere—  
Not that vast mutability which is event,  
The pits and pinnacles of change,  
But man's desire and valiance that range  
All circumstance, and come to port unspent.

Agents are these events, these ecstasies,  
And tribulations, to prove the purities  
Or poor oblivions that are our being. When  
Beauty and peace possess us, they are none  
But as they touch the beauty and peace of men,  
Nor, when our days are done,  
And the last utterance of doom must fall,  
Is the doom anything  
Memorable for its apparelling ;  
The bearing of man facing it is all.

10

So, kinsmen, we present,  
This for no loud event  
That is but fugitive,  
But that you may behold  
Our mimic action mould  
The spirit of man immortally to live.

20



FIRST CHRONICLER. Once when a peril touched the  
days  
Of freedom in our English ways,  
And none renowned in government  
Was equal found,  
Came to the steadfast heart of one,  
30 Who watched in lonely Huntingdon,  
A summons, and he went,  
And tyranny was bound,  
And Cromwell was the lord of his event.

SECOND CHRONICLER. And in that land where voyaging  
The pilgrim Mayflower came to rest,  
Among the chosen, counselling,  
Once, when bewilderment possessed  
A people, none there was might draw  
To fold the wandering thoughts of men,  
40 And make as one the names again  
Of liberty and law.

And then, from fifty fameless years  
In quiet Illinois was sent  
A word that still the Atlantic hears,  
And Lincoln was the lord of his event.

THE TWO SPEAKING TOGETHER. So the uncounted  
spirit wakes  
To the birth  
Of uncounted circumstance.  
And time in a generation makes  
50 Portents majestic a little story of earth  
To be remembered by chance  
At a fire-side ;  
But the ardours that they bear,  
The proud and invincible motions of character—  
These—these abide.

## SCENE I

*The parlour of Abraham Lincoln's House at Springfield, Illinois, early in 1860. MR. STONE, a farmer, and MR. CUFFNEY, a store-keeper, both men of between 50 and 60, are sitting before an early spring fire. It is dusk, but the curtains are not drawn. The men are smoking silently.*

MR. STONE. [*after a pause.*] Abraham. It's a good name for a man to bear, anyway.

MR. CUFFNEY. Yes. That's right.

MR. STONE. [*after another pause.*] Abraham Lincoln. 10  
I've known him forty years. Never crooked once. Well. *He taps his pipe reflectively on the grate. There is another pause.* SUSAN, a servant-maid, comes in, and busies herself lighting candles and drawing the curtains too.

SUSAN. Mrs. Lincoln has just come in. She says she'll be here directly.

MR. CUFFNEY. Thank you.

MR. STONE. Mr. Lincoln isn't home yet, I daresay?

SUSAN. No, Mr. Stone. He won't be long, with 20  
all the gentlemen coming.

MR. STONE. How would you like your master to be President of the United States, Susan?

SUSAN. I'm sure he'd do it very nicely, sir.

MR. CUFFNEY. He would have to leave Springfield, Susan, and go to live in Washington.

SUSAN. I daresay we should take to Washington very well, sir.

MR. CUFFNEY. Ah! I'm glad to hear that.

SUSAN. Mrs. Lincoln's rather particular about the 30  
tobacco smoke.

MR. STONE. To be sure, yes, thank you, Susan.

SUSAN. The master doesn't smoke, you know. And Mrs. Lincoln's specially particular about this room.



MR. CUFFNEY. Quite so. That's very considerate of you, Susan.

*They knock out their pipes.*

SUSAN. Though some people might not hold with a gentleman not doing as he'd a mind in his own house,  
40 as you might say.

*She goes out.*

MR. CUFFNEY. [*after a further pause, stroking his pipe.*] I suppose there's no doubt about the message they'll bring?

MR. STONE. No, that's settled right enough. It'll be an invitation. That's as sure as John Brown's dead.

MR. CUFFNEY. I could never make Abraham out  
rightly about old John. One couldn't stomach slaving  
more than the other, yet Abraham didn't hold with the  
50 old chap standing up against it with the sword. Bad  
philosophy, or something, he called it. Talked about  
fanatics who do nothing but get themselves at a rope's  
end.

MR. STONE. Abraham's all for the constitution. He  
wants the constitution to be an honest master. There's  
nothing he wants like that, and he'll stand for that, firm  
as a Samson of the spirit, if he goes to Washington.  
He'd give his life to persuade the state against slaving,  
but until it is persuaded and makes its laws against it,  
60 he'll have nothing to do with violence in the name of  
laws that aren't made. That's why old John's raiding  
affair stuck in his gullet.

MR. CUFFNEY. He was a brave man, going like that,  
with a few zealous like himself, and a handful of niggers,  
to free thousands.

MR. STONE. He was. And those were brave words  
when they took him out to hang him. "I think, my  
friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and  
humanity. You may dispose of me very easily. I am  
70 nearly disposed of now. But this question is still to be

settled—this negro question, I mean. The end of that is not yet.” I was there that day. Stonewall Jackson was there. He turned away. There was a colonel there giving orders. When it was over, “So perish all foes of the human race” he called out. But only those that were afraid of losing their slaves believed it.

MR. CUFFNEY. [*a pause.*] It was a bad thing to hang a man like that . . . There’s a song that they’ve made about him.

*He sings quietly :*

80

“John Brown’s body lies a mould’ring in the grave,  
But his soul goes marching on. . .”

MR. STONE I know.

THE TWO TOGETHER. [*singing quietly.*]

“The stars of heaven are looking kindly down  
On the grave of old John Brown. . .”

*After a moment MRS. LINCOLN comes in. The men rise.*

MRS. LINCOLN. Good evening, Mr. Stone. Good evening, Mr. Cuffney.

90

MR. STONE AND MR. CUFFNEY. Good evening, ma’am.

MRS. LINCOLN. Sit down, if you please.

*They all sit.*

MR. STONE. This is a great evening for you, ma’am.

MRS. LINCOLN. It is.

MR. CUFFNEY. What time do you expect the deputation, ma’am ?

MRS. LINCOLN. They should be here at seven o’clock.  
[*With an inquisitive nose.*] Surely, Abraham hasn’t been 100  
smoking.

MR. STONE. [*rising.*] Shall I open the window, ma’am ? It gets close of an evening.

MRS. LINCOLN. Naturally, in March. You may leave the window, Samuel Stone. We do not smoke in the parlour.



MR. STONE. [*resuming his seat.*] By no means, ma'am.

MRS. LINCOLN. I shall be obliged to you.

110 MR. CUFFNEY. Has Abraham decided what he will say to the invitation?

MRS. LINCOLN. He will accept it.

MR. STONE. A very right decision, if I may say so.

MRS. LINCOLN. It is.

MR. CUFFNEY. And you, ma'am, have advised him that way, I'll be bound.

MRS. LINCOLN. You said this was a great evening for me. It is, and I'll say more than I mostly do, because it is. I'm likely to go into history now with a great man.  
120 For I know better than any how great he is. I'm plain-looking and I've a sharp tongue, and I've a mind that doesn't always go in his easy, high way. And that's what history will see, and it will laugh a little, and say, "Poor Abraham Lincoln". That's all right, but it's not all. I've always known when he should go forward, and when he should hold back. I've watched, and watched, and what I've learnt America will profit by. There are women like that, lots of them. But I'm lucky. My work's going farther than Illinois—it's going farther than  
130 any of us can tell. I made things easy for him to think and think when we were poor, and now his thinking has brought him to this. They wanted to make him Governor of Oregeon, and he would have gone and have come to nothing there. I stopped him. Now they're coming to ask him to be President, and I've told him to go.

MR. STONE. If you please, ma'am, I should like to apologise for smoking in here.

MRS. LINCOLN. That's no matter, Samuel Stone. Only, don't do it again.

140 MR. CUFFNEY. It's a great place for a man to fill. Do you know how Seward takes Abraham's nomination by the Republicans?



MRS. LINCOLN. Seward is ambitious. He expected the nomination. Abraham will know how to use him.

MR. STONE. The split among the Democrats makes the election of the Republican choice a certainty, I suppose?

MRS. LINCOLN. Abraham says so.

MR. CUFFNEY. You know, it's hard to believe. When I think of the times I've sat in this room of an evening, and seen your husband come in, ma'am, with his battered hat nigh falling off the back of his head, and stuffed with papers that won't go into his pockets, and god-darning some rascal who'd done him about an assignment or a trespass, I can't think he's going up there into the eyes of the world. 150

MRS. LINCOLN. I've tried for years to make him buy a new hat.

MR. CUFFNEY. I have a very large selection just in from New York. Perhaps Abraham might allow me to offer him one for his departure. 160

MRS. LINCOLN. He might. But he'll wear the old one

MR. STONE. Slavery and the South. They're big things he'll have to deal with. "The end of that is not yet" That's what old John Brown said, "The end of that is not yet".

ABRAHAM LINCOLN *comes in, a greenish and crumpled top hat leaving his forehead well uncovered, his wide pocket brimming over with documents. He is 50, and he still preserves his clean-shaven state. He kisses his wife and shakes hands with his friends.* 170

LINCOLN. Well, Mary. How d'ye do, Samuel. How d'ye do, Timothy.

MR. STONE AND MR. CUFFNEY. Good evening, Abraham.

LINCOLN. [*while he takes off his hat and shakes out sundry papers from the lining into a drawer.*] John Brown, did you say? Ay, John Brown. But that's not



the way it's to be done. And you can't do the right  
180 thing the wrong way. That's as bad as the wrong thing,  
if you're going to keep the state together.

MR. CUFFNEY. Well, we'll be going. We only came  
in to give you good-faring, so to say, in the great word  
you've got to speak this evening.

MR. STONE. It makes a humble body almost afraid  
of himself, Abraham, to know his friend is to be one of  
the great ones of the earth, with his yes and no law for  
these many, many thousands of folk.

LINCOLN. It makes a man humble to be chosen so,  
190 Samuel. So humble that no man but would say "No" to  
such bidding if he dare. To be President of this people,  
and trouble gathering everywhere in men's hearts. That's  
a searching thing. Bitterness, and scorn, and wrestling  
often with men I shall despise, and perhaps nothing truly  
done at the end. But I must go. Yes. Thank you,  
Samuel ; thank you, Timothy. Just a glass of that cordial,  
Mary, before they leave.

*He goes to a cupboard.*

May the devil smudge that girl !

200 *Calling at the door.*

Susan ! Susan Deddington ! Where's that darnation  
cordial ?

MRS. LINCOLN. It's all right, Abraham. I told the  
girl to keep it out. The cupboard's choked with papers.

SUSAN. [*coming in with bottle and glasses.*] I'm sure  
I'm sorry. I was told—

LINCOLN. All right, all right, Susan. Get along with  
you.

SUSAN. Thank you, sir.

210 *She goes.*

LINCOLN. [*pouring out drink.*] Poor hospitality for  
whiskey-drinking rascals like yourselves. But the thought's  
good.

MR. STONE Don't mention it, Abraham.

MR. CUFFNEY. We wish you well, Abraham. Our compliments, ma'am. And God bless America. Samuel, I give you the United States, and Abraham Lincoln.

MR. CUFFNEY *and* MR. STONE *drink*

MRS. LINCOLN. Thank you.

LINCOLN. Samuel, Timothy—I drink to the hope of 220 honest friends. Mary, to friendship. I'll need that always, for I've a queer, anxious heart. And, God bless America.

*He and* MRS. LINCOLN *drink.*

MR. STONE. Well, good night, Abraham. Good night, ma'am.

MR. CUFFNEY. Good night, good night.

MRS. LINCOLN. Good night, Mr. Stone. Good night, Mr. Cuffney.

LINCOLN. Good night, Samuel. Good night, Timothy. 230 And thank you for coming.

MR. STONE *and* MR. CUFFNEY *go out.*

MRS. LINCOLN. You'd better see them in here.

LINCOLN. Good. Five minutes to seven. You're sure about it, Mary?

MRS. LINCOLN. Yes. Aren't you?

LINCOLN. We mean to set bounds to slavery. The South will resist. They may try to break away from the Union. That cannot be allowed. If the Union is set aside America will crumble. The saving of it may 240 mean blood.

MRS. LINCOLN. Who is to shape it all if you don't?

LINCOLN. There's nobody. I know it.

MRS. LINCOLN. Then go.

LINCOLN. Go.

MRS. LINCOLN. [*after a moment.*] This hat is a disgrace to you, Abraham. You pay no heed to what I say, and you think it doesn't matter. A man like you ought to think a little about gentility.

LINCOLN. To be sure. I forget.



MRS. LINCOLN. You don't. You just don't heed. Samuel Stone's been smoking in here.

LINCOLN. He's a careless, poor fellow.

MRS. LINCOLN. He is, and a fine example you set him. You don't care whether he makes my parlour smell poison or not.

LINCOLN. Of course I do—

MRS. LINCOLN. You don't. Your head is too stuffed with things to think about my ways. I've got neighbours  
260 if you haven't.

LINCOLN. Well, now, your neighbours are mine, I suppose.

MRS. LINCOLN. Then why won't you consider appearances a little?

LINCOLN. Certainly. I must.

MRS. LINCOLN. Will you get a new hat?

LINCOLN. Yes, I must see about it.

MRS. LINCOLN. When?

LINCOLN. In a day or two. Before long.

270 MRS. LINCOLN. Abraham, I've got a better temper than anybody will ever guess.

LINCOLN. You have, my dear. And you need it, I confess.

SUSAN *comes in.*

SUSAN. The gentlemen have come.

MRS. LINCOLN. I'll come to them.

SUSAN. Does the master want a handkerchief, ma'am? He didn't take one this morning.

LINCOLN. It's no matter now, Susan.

280 SUSAN. If you please, I've brought you one, sir.

*She gives it to him, and goes.*

MRS. LINCOLN. I'll send them in. Abraham, I believe in you.

LINCOLN. I know, I know.

MRS. LINCOLN *goes out.* LINCOLN *moves to a map of the United States that is hanging on the wall, and*

*stands silently looking at it. After a few moments SUSAN comes to the door.*

SUSAN. This way, please.

*She shows in WILLIAM TUCKER, a florid, prosperous merchant ; HENRY HIND, an alert little attorney ; ELIAS PRICE, a lean lay-preacher ; and JAMES MACINTOSH, the editor of a Republican journal.*

SUSAN goes.

TUCKER. Mr. Lincoln. Tucker my name is—William Tucker.

*He presents his companions.*

Mr. Henry Hind—follows your profession, Mr. Lincoln, Leader of the bar in Ohio. Mr. Elias Price, of Pennsylvania. You've heard him preach, maybe. James Macintosh you know. I come from Chicago. 300

LINCOLN. Gentlemen, at your service. How d'ye do, James. Will you be seated ?

*They sit round the table.*

TUCKER. I have the honour to be chairman of this delegation. We are sent from Chicago by the Republican Convention, to inquire whether you will accept their invitation to become the Republican candidate for the office of President of the United States.

PRICE. The Convention is aware, Mr. Lincoln, that under the circumstances, seeing that the Democrats have split, this is more than an invitation to candidature. Their nominee is almost certain to be elected. 310

LINCOLN. Gentlemen, I am known to one of you only. Do you know my many disqualifications for this work ?

HIND. It's only fair to say that they have been discussed freely.

LINCOLN. There are some, shall we say graces, that I lack. Washington does not altogether neglect these. 320

TUCKER. They have been spoken of. But these are days, Mr. Lincoln, if I may say so, too difficult, too



dangerous, for these to weigh at the expense of other qualities that you were considered to possess.

LINCOLN. Seward and Hook have both had great experience.

MACINTOSH. Hook had no strong support. For Seward, there are doubts as to his discretion.

LINCOLN. Do not be under any misunderstanding,  
330 I beg you. I aim at moderation so far it is honest. But I am a very stubborn man, gentlemen. If the South insists upon the extension of slavery, and claims the right to secede, as you know it very well may do, and the decision lies with me, it will mean resistance, inexorable, with blood if needs be. I would have everybody's mind clear as to that.

PRICE. It will be for you to decide, and we believe you to be an upright man, Mr. Lincoln.

LINCOLN. Seward and Hook would be difficult to  
340 carry as subordinates.

TUCKER. But they will have to be carried so, and there's none likelier for the job than you.

LINCOLN. Will your Republican Press stand by me for a principle, James, whatever comes?

MACINTOSH. There's no other man we would follow so readily.

LINCOLN. If you send me, the South will have little but derision for your choice.

HIND. We believe that you'll last out their laughter.  
350

LINCOLN. I can take any man's ridicule—I'm trained to it by a . . . somewhat odd figure that it pleased God to give me, if I may so far be pleasant with you. But this slavery business will be long, and deep, and bitter. I know it. If you do me this honour, gentlemen, you must look to me for no compromise in this matter. If abolition comes in due time by constitutional means, good. I want it. But, while we will not force abolition, we will give slavery no approval, and we will not allow it to extend its



boundaries by one yard. The determination is in my blood. When I was a boy I made a trip to New Orleans, and there I saw them, chained, beaten, kicked as a man would be ashamed to kick a thieving dog. And I saw a young girl driven up and down the room that the bidders might satisfy themselves. And I said then, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard." 360

*A pause.*

You have no conditions to make ?

TUCKER. None.

LINCOLN. [*rising.*] Mrs. Lincoln and I would wish you to take supper with us. 370

TUCKER. That's very kind, I'm sure. And your answer, Mr. Lincoln?

LINCOLN. When you came, you did not know me, Mr. Tucker. You may have something to say now not for my ears.

TUCKER. Nothing in the world, I assure—

LINCOLN. I will prepare Mrs. Lincoln. You will excuse me for no more than a minute.

*He goes out.*

TUCKER. Well, we might have chosen a handsomer 380 article, but I doubt whether we could have chosen a better.

HIND. He would make a great judge—if you weren't prosecuting.

PRICE. I'd tell most people, but I'd ask that man.

TUCKER. He hasn't given us yes or no yet. Why should he leave us like that, as though plain wasn't plain?

HIND. Perhaps he wanted a thought by himself first.

MACINTOSH. It wasn't that. But he was right. Abraham Lincoln sees deeper into men's hearts than most. He knows this day will be a memory to us all our 390 lives. Under his eye, which of you could have given play to any untoward thought that had started in you against him since you came into this room? But, leaving you, he knew you could test yourselves to your own ease, and



400 speak the more confident for it, and, if you found yourselves clean of doubt, carry it all the happier in your minds after. Is there a doubt among us?

TUCKER.

HIND.

PRICE.

} No, none.

MACINTOSH. Then, Mr. Tucker, ask him again when he comes back.

TUCKER. I will.

*They sit in silence for a moment, and LINCOLN comes in again, back to his place at the table.*

410 LINCOLN. I wouldn't have you think it graceless of me to be slow in my answer. But once given, it's for the deep good or the deep ill of all this country. In the face of that a man may well ask himself twenty times, when he's twenty times sure. You make no qualification, any one among you?

TUCKER. None. The invitation is as I put it when we sat down. And I would add that we are, all of us, proud to bear it to a man as whom we feel there is none so fitted to receive it.

LINCOLN. I thank you. I accept.

*He rises, the others with him. He goes to the door and calls.*

Susan.

420 *There is silence, SUSAN comes in.*

SUSAN. Yes, Mr. Lincoln.

LINCOLN. Take these gentlemen to Mrs. Lincoln. I will follow at once.

*The four men go with SUSAN. LINCOLN stands silently for a moment. He goes again to the map and looks at it. He then turns to the table again, and kneels beside it, possessed and deliberate, burying his face in his hands.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE TWO CHRONICLERS. Lonely is the man who under-  
Stands,

Lonely is vision that leads a man away  
From the pasture-lands,  
From the furrows of corn and the brown loads of hay,  
To the mountain-side,  
To the high places where contemplation brings  
All his adventurings  
Among the sowers and the tillers in the wide  
Valleys to one fused experience,  
That shall control  
The courses of his soul,  
And give his hand  
Courage and continence.

10

FIRST CHRONICLER. Shall a man understand,  
He shall know bitterness because his kind,  
Being perplexed of mind,  
Hold issues even that are nothing mated.  
And he shall give  
Counsel out of his wisdom that none shall hear ;  
And steadfast in vain persuasion must he live,  
And unabated  
Shall his temptation be.

20

SECOND CHRONICLER. Coveting the little, the instant gain,  
The brief security,  
And easy-tongued renown,  
Many will mock the vision that his brain  
Builds to a far, unmeasured monument,  
And many bid his resolutions down  
To the wages of content.

FIRST CHRONICLER. A year goes by.

30

THE TWO TOGETHER. Here contemplate  
A heart, undaunted to possess



Itself among the glooms of fate,  
In vision and in loneliness.

## SCENE II

*A year later. Seward's room at Washington.* WILLIAM SEWARD, *Secretary of State*, is seated at his table with JOHNSON WHITE and CALEB JENNINGS, *representing the Commissioners of the Confederate States*.

WHITE. It's the common feeling in the South, Mr. Seward, that you're the one man at Washington to see this thing with large imagination. I say this with no disrespect to the President.

10 SEWARD. I appreciate your kindness, Mr. White. But the Union is the Union—you can't get over that. We are faced with a plain fact. Six of the Southern States have already declared for secession. The President feels, and I may say that I and my colleagues are with him, that to break up the country like that means the decline of America.

JENNINGS. But everything might be done by compromise, Mr. Seward. Withdraw your garrison from Fort Sumter, Beauregard will be instructed to take no further action, South Carolina will be satisfied with the recognition of her authority, and, as likely as not, be willing to give the  
20 lead to the other states in reconsidering secession.

SEWARD. It is certainly a very attractive and, I conceive, a humane proposal.

WHITE. By furthering it you might be the saviour of the country from civil war, Mr. Seward.

SEWARD. The President dwelt on his resolution to hold Fort Sumter in his inaugural address. It will be difficult to persuade him to go back on that. He's firm in his decisions.

WHITE. There are people who would call him stubborn.  
30 Surely if it were put to him tactfully that so simple a course



might avert incalculable disaster, no man would nurse his dignity to the point of not yielding. I speak plainly, but it's a time for plain speaking. Mr. Lincoln is doubtless a man of remarkable qualities : on the two occasions when I have spoken to him I have not been unimpressed. That is so, Mr. Jennings ?

JENNINGS. Certainly.

WHITE. But what does his experience of great affairs of state amount to beside yours, Mr. Seward ? He must know how much he depends on certain members of his Cabinet, I might say upon a certain member, for advice. 40

SEWARD. We have to move warily.

JENNINGS. Naturally. A man is sensitive, doubtless, in his first taste of office.

SEWARD. My support of the President is, of course, unquestionable.

WHITE. Oh, entirely. But how can your support be more valuable than in lending him your unequalled understanding ?

SEWARD. The whole thing is coloured in his mind by 50 the question of slavery.

JENNINGS. Disabuse his mind. Slavery is nothing. Persuade him to withdraw from Fort Sumter, and slavery can be settled round a table. You know there's a considerable support even for abolition in the South itself. If the trade has to be allowed in some districts, what is that compared to the disaster of civil war ?

WHITE. We do not believe that the Southern States wish with any enthusiasm to secede. They merely wish to establish their right to do so. Acknowledge that by 60 evacuating Fort Sumter, and nothing will come of it but a perfectly proper concession to an independence of spirit that is not disloyal to the Union at heart.

SEWARD. You understand, of course, that I can say nothing officially.

JENNINGS. These are nothing but informal suggestions.



SEWARD. But I may tell you that I am not unsympathetic.

70 WHITE. We were sure that that would be so.

SEWARD. And my word is not without influence.

JENNINGS. It can be used to bring you very great credit, Mr. Seward.

SEWARD. In the meantime, you will say nothing of this interview, beyond making your reports, which should be confidential.

WHITE. You may rely upon us.

SEWARD. [*rising with the others.*] Then I will bid you good morning.

80 WHITE. We are profoundly sensible of the magnanimous temper in which we are convinced you will conduct this grave business. Good morning, Mr. Seward.

JENNINGS. And I—

*There is a knock at the door.*

SEWARD. Yes—come in.

*A CLERK comes in.*

CLERK. The President is coming up the stairs, sir.

SEWARD. Thank you.

*The CLERK goes.*

This is unfortunate. Say nothing, and go at once.

90 LINCOLN *comes in, now whiskered and bearded.*

LINCOLN. Good morning, Mr. Seward. Good morning, gentlemen.

SEWARD. Good morning, Mr. President. And I am obliged to you for calling, gentlemen. Good morning.

*He moves towards the door.*

LINCOLN. Perhaps these gentlemen could spare me ten minutes.

WHITE. It might not—

LINCOLN. Say five minutes.

100 JENNINGS. Perhaps you would—

LINCOLN. I am anxious always for any opportunity to exchange views with our friends of the South. Much

enlightenment may be gained in five minutes. Be seated, I beg you—if Mr. Seward will allow us.

SEWARD. By all means. Shall I leave you?

LINCOLN. Leave us—but why? I may want your support, Mr. Secretary, if we should not wholly agree. Be seated, gentlemen.

SEWARD. *places a chair for LINCOLN, and they sit at the table.*

110

LINCOLN. You have messages for us?

WHITE. Well, no, we can't say that.

LINCOLN. No messages? Perhaps I am inquisitive?

SEWARD. These gentlemen are anxious to sound any moderating influences.

LINCOLN. I trust they bring moderating influences with them. You will find me a ready listener, gentlemen.

JENNINGS. It's a delicate matter, Mr. Lincoln. Ours is just an informal visit.

LINCOLN. Quite, quite. But we shall lose nothing by 120 knowing each other's minds.

WHITE. Shall we tell the President what we came to say, Mr. Seward?

LINCOLN. I shall be grateful. If I should fail to understand, Mr. Seward, no doubt, will enlighten me.

JENNINGS. We thought it hardly worth while to trouble you at so early a stage.

LINCOLN. So early a stage of what?

JENNINGS. I mean—

SEWARD. These gentlemen, in a common anxiety for peace, were merely seeking the best channel through which suggestions could be made.

130

LINCOLN. To whom?

SEWARD. To the Government.

LINCOLN. The head of the Government is here.

WHITE. But—

LINCOLN. Come, gentlemen. What is it?

JENNINGS. It's this matter of Fort Sumter, Mr. President.



If you withdraw your garrison from Fort Sumter it won't  
140 be looked upon as weakness in you. It will merely be  
looked upon as a concession to a natural privilege.  
We believe that the South at heart does not want  
secession. It wants to establish the right to decide for  
itself.

LINCOLN. The South wants the stamp of national  
approval upon slavery. It can't have it.

WHITE. Surely that's not the point. There's no law in  
the South against slavery.

LINCOLN. Laws comes from opinion. Mr. White. The  
150 South knows it.

JENNINGS. Mr. President, if I may say so, you don't  
quite understand.

LINCOLN. Does Mr. Seward understand ?

WHITE. We believe so.

LINCOLN. You are wrong. He doesn't understand,  
because you didn't mean him to. I don't blame you.  
You think you are acting for the best. You think you've  
got an honest case. But I'll put your case for you, and  
I'll put it naked. Many people in this country want  
160 abolition ; many don't. I'll say nothing for the moment  
as to the rights and wrongs of it. But every man, whether  
he wants it or not, knows it may come. Why does the  
South propose secession ? Because it knows abolition may  
come, and it wants to avoid it. It wants more : it wants  
the right to extend the slave foundation. We've all been  
to blame for slavery, but we in the North have been willing  
to mend our ways. You have not. So you'll secede, and  
make your own laws. But you weren't prepared for  
resistance ; you don't want resistance. And you hope that  
170 if you can tide over the first crisis and make us give way,  
opinion will prevent us from opposing you with force  
again, and you'll be able to get your own way about the  
slave business by threats. That's your case. You didn't say  
so to Mr. Seward, but it is. Now, I'll give you my answer.



Gentlemen, it's no good hiding this thing in a corner. It's got to be settled. I said the other day that Fort Sumter would be held as long as we could hold it. I said it because I know exactly what it means. Why are you investing it? Say, if you like, it's to establish your right of secession with no purpose of exercising it. Why do you want to establish that right? Because now we will allow no extension of slavery, and because some day we may abolish it. You can't deny it; there's no other answer. 180

JENNINGS. I see how it is. You may force freedom as much as you like, but we are to beware how we force slavery.

LINCOLN. It couldn't be put better, Mr. Jennings. That's what the Union means. It is a Union that stands for common right. That is its foundation—that is why it is for every honest man to preserve it. Be clear about this issue. If there is war, it will not be on the slave question. If the South is loyal to the Union, it can fight slave legislation by constitutional means, and win its way if it can. If it claims the right to secede, then to preserve this country from disruption, to maintain that right to which every state pledged itself when the Union was won for us by our fathers, war may be the only way. We won't break up the Union, and you shan't. In your hands, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. You can have no conflict without yourselves being the aggressors. I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, do not allow it to break our bonds of affection. That is our answer. Tell them that. Will you tell them that? 190 200

WHITE. You are determined?

LINCOLN. I beg you to tell them.

JENNINGS. It shall be as you wish.

LINCOLN. Implore them to order Beauregard's return. You can telegraph it now, from here. Will you do that? 210



WHITE. If you wish it.

LINCOLN. Earnestly. Mr. Seward, will you please place a clerk at their service. Ask for an answer.

SEWARD *rings a bell. A CLERK comes in.*

SEWARD. Give these gentlemen a private wire. Place yourself at their disposal.

CLERK. Yes, sir.

220 WHITE and JENNINGS go out with the CLERK. For a moment LINCOLN and SEWARD are silent, LINCOLN pacing the room, SEWARD standing at the table.

LINCOLN. Seward, this won't do.

SEWARD. You don't suspect—

230 LINCOLN. I do not. But let us be plain. No man can say how wisely, but providence has brought me to the leadership of this country, with a task before me greater than that which rested on Washington himself. When I made my Cabinet, you were the first man I chose. I do not regret it ; I think I never shall. But remember, faith earns faith. What is it ? Why didn't those men come to see me ?

SEWARD. They thought my word might bear more weight with you than theirs.

LINCOLN. Your word for what ?

SEWARD. Discretion about Fort Sumter.

LINCOLN. Discretion ?

SEWARD. It's devastating, this thought of war.

240 LINCOLN. It is. Do you think I'm less sensible of that than you ? War should be impossible. But you can only make it impossible by destroying its causes. Don't you see that to withdraw from Fort Sumter is to do nothing of the kind ? If one half of this country claims the right to disown the Union, the claim in the eyes of every true guardian among us must be a cause for war, unless we hold the Union to be a false thing instead of the public consent to decent principles of life that it is. If we withdraw from Fort Sumter, we do nothing to destroy that



cause. We can only destroy it by convincing them that secession is a betrayal of their trust. Please God we may do so.

SEWARD. Has there, perhaps, been some timidity in making all this clear to the country? 250

LINCOLN. Timidity? And you were talking of discretion.

SEWARD. I mean that perhaps our policy has not been sufficiently defined.

LINCOLN. And have you not concurred in all our decisions? Do not deceive yourself. You urge me to discretion in one breath and tax me with timidity in the next. While there was hope that they might call Beau-regard back out of their own good sense, I was determined 260 to say nothing to inflame them. Do you call that timidity? Now their intention is clear, and you've heard me speak this morning clearly also. And now you talk about discretion—you, who call what was discretion at the right time timidity, now counsel timidity at the wrong time, and call it discretion. Seward, you may think I'm simple, but I can see your mind working as plainly as you might see the innards of a clock. You can bring great gifts to this Government, with your zeal, and your administrative experience, and your love of men. Don't spoil it by 270 thinking I've got a dull brain.

SEWARD. [*slowly.*] Yes, I see. I've not been thinking quite clearly about it all.

LINCOLN. [*taking a paper from his pocket.*] Here's the paper you sent me. "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration. Great Britain . . . Russia . . . Mexico . . . policy. Either the President must control this himself, or devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. It is not my special province. But I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility." 280

*There is a pause, the two men looking at each other without speaking. LINCOLN hands the paper to*



SEWARD. *who holds it for a moment, tears it up, and throws it into his basket.*

SEWARD. I beg your pardon.

LINCOLN. [*taking his hand.*] That's brave of you.

MR. SLANEY, *a Secretary, comes in.*

290 sir. SLANEY. There's a messenger from Major Anderson, He's ridden straight from Fort Sumter.

LINCOLN. Take him to my room. No, bring him here.

SLANEY *goes.*

SEWARD. What does it mean?

LINCOLN. I don't like the sound of it.

*He rings a bell. A CLERK comes in.*

Are there any gentlemen of the Cabinet in the house?

CLERK. Mr. Chase and Mr. Blair, I believe, sir.

300 LINCOLN. My compliments to them, and will they be prepared to see me here at once if necessary. Send the same message to any other Ministers you can find.

CLERK. Yes, sir.

*He goes.*

LINCOLN. We may have to decide now—now.

SLANEY *shows in a perspiring and dust-covered MESSENGER, and retires.*

LINCOLN. From Major Anderson?

THE MESSENGER. Yes, sir. Word of mouth, sir.

LINCOLN. Your credentials?

310 THE MESSENGER. [*giving LINCOLN a paper.*] Here, sir.

LINCOLN. [*glancing at it.*] Well?

THE MESSENGER. Major Anderson presents his duty to the Government. He can hold the Fort three days more without provisions and reinforcements.

LINCOLN *rings the bell, and waits until a third CLERK comes in.*

LINCOLN. See if Mr. White and Mr. Jennings have had any answer yet. Mr.——what's his name?

SEWARD. Hawkins.

LINCOLN. Mr. Hawkins is attending to them. And 320  
ask Mr. Slaney to come here.

CLERK. Yes, sir.

*He goes.* LINCOLN *sits at the table and writes.*

SLANEY *comes in.*

LINCOLN. [*writing.*] Mr. Slaney, do you know where  
General Scott is?

SLANEY. At headquarters, I think, sir.

LINCOLN. Take this to him yourself and bring an  
answer back. 330

SLANEY. Yes, sir.

*He takes the note, and goes.*

LINCOLN. Are things very bad at the fort?

THE MESSENGER. The Major says three days, sir.  
Most of us would have said twenty-four hours.

*A knock at the door.*

SEWARD. Yes.

HAWKINS *comes in.*

HAWKINS. Mr. White is just receiving a message across  
the wire, sir.

LINCOLN. Ask him to come here directly he's finished. 340

HAWKINS. Yes, sir.

*He goes.* LINCOLN *goes to a far door and opens it.*

*He speaks to the MESSENGER.*

LINCOLN. Will you wait in here?

*The MESSENGER goes through.*

SEWARD. Do you mind if I smoke?

LINCOLN. Not at all, not at all.

SEWARD *lights a cigar.*

Three days. If White's message doesn't help us—three  
days. 350

SEWARD. But surely we must withdraw as a matter of  
military necessity now.

LINCOLN. Why doesn't White come?

SEWARD. *goes to the window and throws it up. He*



*stands looking down into the street. LINCOLN stands at the table looking fixedly at the door. After a moment or two there is a knock.*

LINCOLN. Come in.

360

HAWKINS *shows in* WHITE and JENNINGS, and goes out. SEWARD closes the window.

LINCOLN. Well?

WHITE. I'm sorry. They won't give way.

LINCOLN. You told them all I said?

JENNINGS. Everything.

LINCOLN. It's critical.

WHITE. They are definite.

LINCOLN *paces once or twice up and down the room, standing again at his place at the table.*

370

LINCOLN. They leave no opening?

WHITE. I regret to say, none.

LINCOLN. It's a grave decision. Terribly grave.

Thank you, gentlemen. Good morning.

WHITE and JENNINGS. Good morning, gentlemen.

*They go out.*

LINCOLN. My God. Seward, we need great courage, great faith.

*He rings the bell. The SECOND CLERK comes in.*

LINCOLN. Did you take my messages?

CLERK. Yes, sir. Mr. Chase and Mr. Blair are here.

380 The other Ministers are coming immediately.

LINCOLN. Ask them to come here at once. And send Mr. Slaney in directly he returns.

CLERK. Yes, sir.

*He goes.*

LINCOLN. [*after a pause.*] "There is a tide in the affairs of men . . ." Do you read Shakespeare, Seward?

SEWARD. Shakespeare? No.

LINCOLN. Ah!

390

SALMON CHASE *Secretary of the Treasury, and*  
MONTGOMERY BLAIR, *Postmaster-General, come in.*

LINCOLN. Good morning, Mr. Chase, Mr. Blair.

SEWARD. Good morning, gentlemen.

BLAIR. Good morning, Mr. President. How d'ye do, Mr. Seward.

CHASE. Good morning, Mr. President. Something urgent?

LINCOLN. Let us be seated.

*As they draw chairs up to the table, the other members of the Cabinet, SIMSON CAMERON, CALEB SMITH, BURNET HOOK, and GIDEON WELLES, come in. There is an exchange of greetings, while they arrange themselves round the table.* 400

LINCOLN. Gentlemen, we meet in a crisis, the most fateful, perhaps, that has ever faced any Government in this country. It can be stated briefly. A message has just come from Anderson. He can hold Fort Sumter three days at most unless we send men and provisions.

CAMERON. How many men?

LINCOLN. I shall know from Scott in a few minutes how many are necessary. 410

WELLES. Suppose we haven't as many.

LINCOLN. Then it's a question of provisioning. We may not be able to do enough to be effective. The question is whether we shall do as much as we can.

HOOK. If we withdrew altogether, wouldn't it give the South a lead towards compromise, as being an acknowledgement of their authority, while leaving us free to plead military necessity if we found public opinion dangerous?

LINCOLN. My mind is clear. To do less than we can do, whatever that may be, will be fundamentally to allow the South's claim to right of secession. That is my opinion. If you evade the question now, you will have to answer it to-morrow. 420

BLAIR. I agree with the President.

HOOK. We ought to defer action as long as possible. I consider that we should withdraw.



LINCOLN. Don't you see that to withdraw may postpone war, but that it will make it inevitable in the end.

SMITH. It is inevitable if we resist.

430 LINCOLN. I fear it will be so. But in that case we shall enter it with uncompromised principles. Mr. Chase?

CHASE. It is difficult. But, on the whole, my opinion is with yours, Mr. President.

LINCOLN. And you, Seward?

SEWARD. I respect your opinion, but I must differ.

*A knock at the door.*

LINCOLN. Come in.

SLANEY comes in. He gives a letter to LINCOLN and goes.

440 LINCOLN. [*reading.*] Scott says twenty thousand men.

SEWARD. We haven't ten thousand ready.

LINCOLN. It remains a question of sending provisions. I charge you, all of you, to weigh this thing with all your understanding. To temporise now cannot, in my opinion, avert war. To speak plainly to the world in standing by our resolution to hold Fort Sumter with all our means, and in a plain declaration that the Union must be preserved, will leave us with a clean cause, simply and loyally supported. I tremble at the thought of war. But we  
450 have in our hands a sacred trust. It is threatened. We have had no thought of aggression. We have been the aggressed. Persuasion has failed, and I conceive it to be our duty to resist. To withhold supplies from Anderson would be to deny that duty. Gentlemen, the matter is before you.

*A pause.*

For provisioning the fort?

LINCOLN, CHASE, and BLAIR hold up their hands.

LINCOLN. For immediate withdrawal?

460 SEWARD, CAMERON, SMITH, HOOK, and WELLELS hold up their hands. There is a pause of some moments.

LINCOLN. Gentlemen, I may have to take upon myself

the responsibility of overriding your vote. It will be for me to satisfy Congress and public opinion. Should I receive any resignations?

*There is silence.*

LINCOLN. I thank you for your consideration, gentlemen. That is all.

*They rise, and the Ministers, with the exception of SEWARD, go out, talking as they pass beyond the door.* 470

LINCOLN. You are wrong, Seward, wrong.

SEWARD. I believe you. I respect your judgment even as far as that. But I must speak as I feel.

LINCOLN. May I speak to this man alone?

SEWARD. Certainly.

*He goes out. LINCOLN stands motionless for a moment. Then he moves to a map of the United States, much larger than the one in his Illinois home, and looks at it as he did there. He goes to the far door and opens it.* 480

LINCOLN. Will you come?

*The MESSENGER comes.*

LINCOLN. Can you ride back to Major Anderson at once?

THE MESSENGER. Yes, sir.

LINCOLN. Tell him that we cannot reinforce him immediately. We haven't the men.

THE MESSENGER. Yes, sir.

LINCOLN. And say that the first convey of supplies will leave Washington this evening. 490

THE MESSENGER. Yes, sir.

LINCOLN. Thank you.

*The MESSENGER goes. LINCOLN stands at the table for a moment; he rings the bell. HAWKINS comes in.*

LINCOLN. Mr. Slaney, please.

HAWKINS. Yes, sir.

*He goes, and a moment later SLANEY comes in.*



LINCOLN. Go to General Scott. Ask him to come to  
500 me at once.

SLANEY. Yes, sir.

*He goes.*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE TWO CHRONICLERS. You who have gone gathering  
Cornflowers and meadowsweet,  
Heard the hazels glancing down  
On September eves,  
Seen the homeward rooks on wing  
Over fields of golden wheat,  
And the silver cups that crown  
Water-lily leaves ;

10 You who know the tenderness  
Of old men at eve-tide,  
Coming from the hedgerows,  
Coming from the plough,  
And the wandering caress  
Of winds upon the woodside,  
When the crying yaffle goes  
Underneath the bough ;

20 FIRST CHRONICLER. You who mark the flowing  
Of sap upon the May-time,  
And the waters welling  
From the watershed,  
You who count the growing  
Of harvest and hay-time,  
Knowing these the telling  
Of your daily bread ;

SECOND CHRONICLER. You who cherish courtesy  
With your fellows at your gate,

And about your hearthstone sit  
 Under love's decrees,  
 You who know that death will be  
 Speaking with you soon or late,

30

THE TWO CHRONICLERS. Kinsmen, what is mother-wit  
 But the light of these ?

Knowing these, what is there more  
 For learning in your little years ?  
 Are not these all gospels bright  
 Shining on your day ?

How then shall your hearts be sore  
 With envy and her brood of fears,  
 How forget the words of light  
 From the mountain-way ?

40

Blessed are the merciful. . .  
 Does not every threshold seek  
 Meadows and the flight of birds  
 For compassion still ?

Blessed are the merciful. . .  
 Are we pilgrims yet to speak  
 Out of Olivet the words  
 Of Knowledge and good-will ?

FIRST CHRONICLER. Two years of darkness, and this  
 man but grows  
 Greater in resolution, more constant in compassion.  
 He goes  
 The way of dominion in pitiful, high-hearted fashion.

### SCENE III

*Nearly two years later.*

A small reception room at the White House. MRS.  
 LINCOLN, dressed in a fashion perhaps a little too  
 considered, despairing as she now does of any



*sartorial grace in her husband, and acutely conscious that she must meet this necessity of office alone, is writing. She rings the bell, and SUSAN, who has taken her promotion more philosophically, comes in.*

MRS. LINCOLN. Admit any one who calls, Susan.  
10 And inquire whether the President will be in to tea.

SUSAN. Mr. Lincoln has just sent word that he will be in.

MRS. LINCOLN. Very well.

SUSAN *is going.*

Susan.

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. LINCOLN. You still say Mr. Lincoln. You should say the President.

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am. But you see, ma'am, it's  
20 difficult after calling him Mr. Lincoln for fifteen years.

MRS. LINCOLN. But you must remember. Everybody calls him the President now.

SUSAN. No, ma'am. There's a good many people call him Father Abraham now. And there's some that like him even better than that. Only to-day Mr. Coldpenny, at the stores, said, "Well, Susan, and how's old Abe this morning?"

MRS. LINCOLN. I hope you don't encourage them.

SUSAN. Oh no, ma'am. I always refer to him as  
30 Mr. Lincoln.

MRS. LINCOLN. Yes, but you must say the President.

SUSAN. I'm afraid I shan't ever learn, ma'am.

MRS. LINCOLN. You must try.

SUSAN. Yes, of course, ma'am.

MRS. LINCOLN. And bring any visitors up.

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am. There's a lady waiting now.

MRS. LINCOLN. Then why didn't you say so?

SUSAN. That's what I was going to, ma'am, when you began to talk about Mr.—I mean the President, ma'am.

40 MRS. LINCOLN. Well, show her up.

SUSAN goes. MRS. LINCOLN closes her writing desk.

SUSAN returns, showing in MRS. GOLIATH BLOW.

SUSAN. Mrs. Goliath Blow.

*She goes.*

MRS. BLOW. Good afternoon, Mrs. Lincoln.

MRS. LINCOLN. Good afternoon, Mrs. Blow. Sit down, please.

*They sit.*

MRS. BLOW. And is the dear President well?

MRS. LINCOLN. Yes. He's rather tired.

50

MRS. BLOW. Of course, to be sure. This dreadful war. But I hope he's not getting tired of the war.

MRS. LINCOLN. It's a constant anxiety for him. He feels his responsibility very deeply.

MRS. BLOW. To be sure. But you mustn't let him get war-weary. 'These monsters in the South have got to be stamped out.

MRS. LINCOLN. I don't think you need be afraid of the President's firmness.

MRS. BLOW. Oh, of course not. I was only saying 60 to Goliath yesterday, "The President will never give way till he has the South squealing," and Goliath agreed.

SUSAN comes in.

SUSAN. Mrs. Otherly, ma'am.

MRS. LINCOLN. Show Mrs. Otherly in.

SUSAN goes.

MRS. BLOW. Oh, that dreadful woman. I believe she wants the war to stop.

SUSAN. [ *at the door.* ] Mrs. Otherly.

MRS. OTHERLY comes in and SUSAN goes.

70

MRS. LINCOLN. Good afternoon, Mrs. Otherly. You know Mrs. Goliath Blow?

MRS. OTHERLY. Yes. Good afternoon.

*She sits.*

MRS. BLOW. Goliath says the war will go on for another three years at least.



MRS. OTHERLY. Three years ? That would be terrible, wouldn't it ?

80 MRS. BLOW. We must be prepared to make sacrifices.

MRS. OTHERLY. Yes.

MRS. BLOW. It makes my blood boil to think of those people.

MRS. OTHERLY. I used to know a lot of them. Some of them were very kind and nice.

MRS. BLOW. That was just their cunning, depend on it. I'm afraid there's a good deal of disloyalty among us. Shall we see the dear President this afternoon, Mrs. Lincoln ?

MRS. LINCOLN. He will be here directly, I think.

90 MRS. BLOW. You're looking wonderfully well, with all the hard work that you have to do. I've really had to drop some of mine. And with expenses going up, it's all very lowering, don't you think ? Goliath and I have had to reduce several of our subscriptions. But, of course, we all have to deny ourselves something. Ah, good afternoon, dear Mr. President.

LINCOLN *comes in.* THE LADIES *rise and shake hands with him.*

LINCOLN. Good afternoon, ladies.

100 MRS. OTHERLY. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

*They all sit.*

MRS. BLOW. And is there any startling news, Mr. President ?

LINCOLN. Madam, every morning when I wake up, and say to myself, a hundred, or two hundred, or a thousand of my countrymen will be killed to-day, I find it startling.

MRS. BLOW. Oh yes, of course, to be sure. But I mean, is there any good news ?

110 LINCOLN. Yes. There is news of a victory. They lost twenty-seven hundred men—we lost eight hundred.

MRS. BLOW. How splendid.

LINCOLN. Thirty-five hundred.



MRS. BLOW. Oh, but you mustn't talk like that, Mr. President. There were only eight hundred that mattered.

LINCOLN. The world is larger than your heart, madam.

MRS. BLOW. Now the dear President is becoming whimsical, Mrs. Lincoln.

SUSAN *brings in tea-tray, and hands tea round.*

LINCOLN *takes none.* SUSAN *goes.*

MRS. OTHERLY. Mr. President.

LINCOLN. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. OTHERLY. I don't like to impose upon your hospitality. I know how difficult everything is for you. But one has to take one's opportunities. May I ask you a question?

LINCOLN. Certainly, ma'am.

MRS. OTHERLY. Isn't it possible for you to stop this war? In the name of a suffering country, I ask you that.

MRS. BLOW. I'm sure such a question would never have entered my head.

LINCOLN. It is a perfectly right question. Ma'am, I have but one thought always—how can this thing be stopped? But we must ensure the integrity of the Union. In two years war has become an hourly bitterness to me. I believe I suffer no less than any man. But it must be endured. The cause was a right one two years ago. It is unchanged.

MRS. OTHERLY. I know you are noble and generous. But I believe that war must be wrong under any circumstances, for any cause.

MRS. BLOW. I'm afraid the President would have but little encouragement if he listened often to this kind of talk.

LINCOLN. I beg you not to harass yourself, madam. Ma'am, I too believe war to be wrong. It is the weakness and the jealousy and the folly of men that make a thing so wrong possible. But we are all weak, and jealous, and foolish. That's how the world is, ma'am, and we cannot



outstrip the world. Some of the worst of us are sullen,  
150 aggressive still—just clumsy, greedy pirates. Some of  
us have grown out of that. But the best of us have an  
instinct to resist aggression if it won't listen to persuasion.  
You may say it's a wrong instinct. I don't know. But  
it's there, and it's there in millions of good men. I don't  
believe it's a wrong instinct. I believe that the world  
must come to wisdom slowly. It is for us who hate aggres-  
sion to persuade men always and earnestly against it, and  
hope that, little by little, they will hear us. But in the  
meantime there will come moments when the aggressors  
160 will force the instinct to resistance to act. Then we must  
act earnestly, praying always in our courage that never  
again will this thing happen. And then we must turn  
again and again, and again to persuasion. This appeal  
to force is the misdeed of an imperfect world. But we  
are imperfect. We must strive to purify the world, but  
we must not think ourselves pure above the world. When  
I had this thing to decide, it would have been easy to say,  
"No, I will have none of it ; it is evil, and I will not  
touch it." But that would have decided nothing, and I  
170 saw what I believed to be the truth as I now put it to you,  
ma'am. It's a forlorn thing for any man to have this  
responsibility in his heart. I may see wrongly, but that's  
how I see.

MRS. BLOW. I quite agree with you, Mr. President.  
These brutes in the South must be taught, though I doubt  
whether you can teach them anything except by destroying  
them. That's what Goliath says.

LINCOLN. Goliath must be getting quite an old man.

MRS. BLOW. Indeed, he's not, Mr. President. Goliath  
180 is only thirty-eight.

LINCOLN. Really, now ? Perhaps I might be able to  
get him a commission.

MRS. BLOW. Oh, no. Goliath couldn't be spared.  
He's doing contracts for the Government, you know ;



Goliath couldn't possibly go. I'm sure he will be very pleased when I tell him what you say about these people who want to stop the war, Mr. President. I hope Mrs. Otherly is satisfied. Of course, we could all complain. We all have to make sacrifices, as I told Mrs. Otherly.

MRS. OTHERLY. Thank you, Mr. President, for what 190  
you've said. I must try to think about it. But I always believed war to be wrong. I didn't want my boy to go, because I believed it to be wrong. But he would. That came to me last week.

*She hands a paper to LINCOLN.*

LINCOLN. [*looks at it, rises, and hands it back to her.*]  
Ma'am, there are times when no man may speak. I grieve for you, I grieve for you.

MRS. OTHERLY. [*rising.*] I think I will go. You don't mind my saying what I did? 200

LINCOLN. We are all poor creatures, ma'am. Think kindly of me. [*He takes her hand.*] Mary.

MRS. LINCOLN *goes out with* MRS. OTHERLY.

MRS. BLOW. Of course it's very sad for her, poor woman. But she makes her trouble worse by these perverted views, doesn't she? And, I hope you will show no signs of weakening, Mr. President, till it has been made impossible for those shameful rebels to hold up their heads again. Goliath says you ought to make a proclamation that no mercy will be shown to them afterwards. 210  
I'm sure I shall never speak to one of them again.

*Rising.*

Well, I must be going. I'll see Mrs. Lincoln as I go out. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

*She turns at the door, and offers LINCOLN her hand, which he does not take.*

LINCOLN. Good afternoon, madam. And I'd like to offer ye a word of advice. That poor mother told me what she thought. I don't agree with her, but I honour her. She's wrong, but she is noble. You've told me 220



what you think. I don't agree with you, and I'm ashamed of you and your like. You, who have sacrificed nothing, babble about destroying the South while other people conquer it. I accepted this war with a sick heart, and I've a heart that's near to breaking every day. I accepted it in the name of humanity, and just and merciful dealing, and the hope of love and charity on earth. And you come to me, talking of revenge and destruction, and malice, and enduring hate. These gentle people are mistaken, 230 but they are mistaken cleanly, and in a great name. It is you that dishonour the cause for which we stand—it is you who would make it a mean and little thing. Good afternoon.

*He opens the door and MRS. GOLIATH, finding words inadequate, goes. LINCOLN moves across the room and rings a bell. After a moment, SUSAN comes in.*

LINCOLN. Susan, if that lady comes here again she may meet with an accident.

SUSAN. Yes, sir. Is that all, sir?

240 LINCOLN. No, sir, it is not all, sir. I don't like this coat. I am going to change it. I shall be back in a minute or two, and if a gentleman named Mr. Frederick Douglass calls, ask him to wait in here.

*He goes out. SUSAN collects the tea-cups. As she is going to the door a quiet, grave, white-haired negro appears facing her. SUSAN starts violently.*

THE NEGRO. [*he talks slowly and very quietly.*] It is all right.

SUSAN. And who in the name of night might you be?

250 THE NEGRO. Mista Frederick Douglass. Mista Lincoln tell me to come here. Nobody stop me, so I come to look for him.

SUSAN. Are you Mr. Frederick Douglass?

DOUGLASS. Yes.

SUSAN. Mr. Lincoln will be here directly. He's gone to change his coat. You'd better sit down.

DOUGLASS. Yes.

*He does so, looking about him with a certain pathetic inquisitiveness.*

Mista Lincoln live here. You his servant? A very fine 260  
thing for young girl to be servant to Mista Lincoln.

SUSAN. Well, we get on very well together.

DOUGLASS. A very bad thing to be slave in South.

SUSAN. Look here, you Mr. Douglass, don't you go  
mixing me up with slaves.

DOUGLASS. No, you not slave. You servant, but you  
free body. That very mighty thing. A poor servant, born  
free.

SUSAN. Yes, but look here, are you pitying me, with 270  
your poor servant?

DOUGLASS. Pity? No. I think you very mighty.

SUSAN. Well, I don't know so much about mighty.  
But I expect you're right. It isn't every one that rises  
to the White House.

DOUGLASS. It not every one that is free body. That  
is why you mighty.

SUSAN. I've never thought much about it.

DOUGLASS. I think always about it.

SUSAN. I suppose you're free, aren't you?

DOUGLASS. Yes. Not born free. I was beaten when 280  
I a little nigger. I saw my mother—I will not remember  
what I saw.

SUSAN. I'm sorry, Mr. Douglass. That was wrong.

DOUGLASS. Yes. Wrong.

SUSAN. Are all nig—I mean are all black gentlemen like  
you?

DOUGLASS. No. I have advantages. They not many  
have advantages.

SUSAN. No, I suppose not. Here's Mr. Lincoln  
coming.

290

LINCOLN, *coated after his heart's desire, comes to the door.*

DOUGLASS *rises.*



SUSAN. This is the gentleman you said, sir.

*She goes out with the tray.*

LINCOLN. Mr. Douglass, I'm very glad to see you.

*He offers his hand. DOUGLASS takes it, and is about to kiss it. LINCOLN stops him gently.*

LINCOLN. [*sitting.*] Sit down, will you?

DOUGLASS. [*still standing, keeping his hat in his*  
300 *hand.*] It very kind of Mista Lincoln ask me to come to see him.

LINCOLN. I was afraid you might refuse.

DOUGLASS. A little shy? Yes. But so much to ask.  
Glad to come.

LINCOLN. Please sit down.

DOUGLASS. Polite?

LINCOLN. Please. I can't sit myself, you see, if you  
don't.

DOUGLASS. Black, black. White, white.

310 LINCOLN. Nonsense. Just two old men, sitting  
together [*DOUGLASS sits to LINCOLN's gesture.*]*—and*  
talking.

DOUGLASS. I think I older man than Mista LINCOLN.

LINCOLN. Yes, I expect you are. I'm fifty-four.

DOUGLASS. I seventy-two.

LINCOLN. I hope I shall look as young when I'm  
seventy-two.

DOUGLASS. Cold water. Much walk. Believe in Lord  
Jesus Christ. Have always little herbs learnt when a  
320 little nigger. Mista Lincoln try. Very good.

*He hands a small twist of paper to LINCOLN.*

LINCOLN. Now, that's uncommon kind of you. Thank  
you. I've heard much about your preaching, Mr. Douglass.

DOUGLASS. Yes.

LINCOLN. I should like to hear you.

DOUGLASS. Mista Lincoln great friend of my people.

LINCOLN. I have come at length to a decision.

DOUGLASS. A decision?

LINCOLN. Slavery is going. We have been resolved always to confine it. Now it shall be abolished. 330

DOUGLASS. You sure ?

LINCOLN. Sure.

DOUGLASS *slowly stands up, bows his head, and sits again.*

DOUGLASS. My people much to learn. Years, and years, and years. Ignorant, frightened, suspicious people. It will be difficult, very slow. [*With growing passion.*] But born free bodies. Free. I born slave, Mista Lincoln. No man understand who not born slave.

LINCOLN. Yes, yes. I understand. 340

DOUGLASS. [*with his normal regularity.*] I think so. Yes.

LINCOLN. I should like you to ask me any question you wish.

DOUGLASS. I have some complaint. Perhaps I not understand.

LINCOLN. Tell me.

DOUGLASS. Southern soldiers take some black men prisoner. Black men in your uniform. Take them prisoner. Then murder them.

LINCOLN. I know. 350

DOUGLASS. What you do ?

LINCOLN. We have sent a protest.

DOUGLASS. No good. Must do more.

LINCOLN. What more can we do ?

DOUGLASS. You *know*.

LINCOLN. Yes, but don't ask me for reprisals.

DOUGLASS. [*gleaming.*] Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.

LINCOLN. No, no. You must think. Think what you 360 are saying.

DOUGLASS. I think of murdered black men.

LINCOLN. You would not ask me to murder ?

DOUGLASS. Punish—not murder.



LINCOLN. Yes, murder. How can I kill men in cold blood for what has been done by others? Think what would follow. It is for us to set a great example, not to follow a wicked one. You do believe that, don't you?

370 DOUGLASS. [ *after a pause.* ] I know. Yes. Let your light so shine before men. I trust Mista Lincoln. Will trust. I was wrong. I was too sorry for my people.

LINCOLN. Will you remember this? For more than two years I have thought of you every day. I have grown a weary man with thinking. But I shall not forget. I promise that.

DOUGLASS. You great, kind friend. I will love you.  
*A knock at the door.*

LINCOLN. Yes.

SUSAN *comes in.*

SUSAN. An officer gentleman. He says it's very important.

380 LINCOLN. I'll come.

*He and DOUGLASS rise.*

Wait, will you, Mr. Douglass? I want to ask you some questions.

*He goes out. It is getting dark, and SUSAN lights a lamp and draws the curtains. DOUGLASS stands by the door looking after LINCOLN.*

390 DOUGLASS. He very good man.

SUSAN. You've found that out, have you?

DOUGLASS. Do you love him, you white girl?

SUSAN. Of course I do.

DOUGLASS. Yes, you must.

SUSAN. He's a real white man. No offence, of course.

DOUGLASS. Not offend. He talk to me as if black no difference.

SUSAN. But I tell you what, Mr. Douglass. He'll kill himself over this war, his heart's that kind—like a shorn lamb, as they say.

400 DOUGLASS. Very unhappy war.

SUSAN. But I suppose he's right. It's got to go on till it's settled.

*In the street below a body of people is heard approaching, singing "John Brown's Body". DOUGLASS and SUSAN stand listening, SUSAN joining in the song as it passes and fades away.*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

FIRST CHRONICLER. Unchanged our time. And further yet

In loneliness must be the way,  
And difficult and deep the debt  
Of constancy to pay.

SECOND CHRONICLER. And one denies, and one forsakes.  
And still unquestioning he goes,  
Who has his lonely thoughts, and makes  
A world of those.

THE TWO TOGETHER. When the high heart we magnify,  
And the sure vision celebrate,  
And worship greatness passing by,  
Ourselves are great.

10

#### SCENE IV

*About the same date. A meeting of the Cabinet at Washington. SMITH has gone and CAMERON has been replaced by EDWIN STANTON, Secretary of War. Otherwise the Ministry, completed by SEWARD, CHASE, HOOK, BLAIR, and WELLES, is as before. They are now arranging themselves at the table, leaving LINCOLN's place empty*

SEWARD. [*coming in*] I've just had my summons.  
Is there some special news?



10 STANTON. Yes. McClellan has defeated Lee at Antietam. It's our greatest success. They ought not to recover from it. The tide is turning.

BLAIR. Have you seen the President ?

STANTON. I've just been with him.

WELLES. What does he say ?

STANTON. He only said "at last". He's coming directly.

20 HOOK. He will bring up his proclamation again. In my opinion it is inopportune.

SEWARD. Well, we've learnt by now that the President is the best man among us.

HOOK. There's a good deal of feeling against him everywhere, I find.

BLAIR. He's the one man with character enough for this business.

HOOK. There are other opinions.

SEWARD. Yes, but not here, surely.

30 HOOK. It's not for me to say. But I ask you, what does he mean about emancipation ? I've always understood that it was the Union we were fighting for, and that abolition was to be kept in our minds for legislation at the right moment. And now one day he talks as though emancipation were his only concern, and the next as though he would throw up the whole idea, if by doing it he could secure peace with the establishment of the Union. Where are we ?

40 SEWARD. No, you're wrong. It's the Union first now with him, but there's no question about his views on slavery. You know that perfectly well. But he has always kept his policy about slavery free in his mind, to be directed as he thought best for the sake of the Union. You remember his words : "If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it ; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it ; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do

that. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union." Nothing could be plainer than that, just as nothing could be plainer than his determination to free the slaves when he can.

HOOK. Well, there are some who would have acted 50 differently.

BLAIR. And you may depend upon it they would not have acted so wisely.

STANTON. I don't altogether agree with the President. But he's the only man I should agree with at all.

HOOK. To issue the proclamation now, and that's what he will propose, mark my word, will be to confuse the public mind just when we want to keep it clear.

WELLES. Are you sure he will propose to issue it now ?

60

HOOK. You see if he doesn't.

WELLES. If he does I shall support him.

SEWARD. Is Lee's army broken ?

STANTON. Not yet—but it is in grave danger.

HOOK. Why doesn't the President come ? One would think this news was nothing.

CHASE. I must say I'm anxious to know what he has to say about it all.

*A CLERK comes in.*

CLERK. The President's compliments, and he will be 70 here in a moment.

*He goes.*

HOOK. I shall oppose it if it comes up.

CHASE. He may say nothing about it.

SEWARD. I think he will.

STANTON. Anyhow, it's the critical moment.

BLAIR. Here he comes.

*LINCOLN comes in carrying a small book.*

LINCOLN. Good morning, gentlemen.

*He takes his place.*

80

THE MINISTERS. Good morning, Mr. President.

D



SEWARD. Great news, we hear.

HOOK. If we leave things with the army to take their course for a little now, we ought to see through our difficulties.

LINCOLN. It's an exciting morning, gentlemen. I feel rather excited myself. I find my mind not at its best in excitement. Will you allow me?

*Opening his book.*

90 It may compose us all. It is Mr. Artemus Ward's latest.

THE MINISTERS, *with the exception of* HOOK, *who makes no attempt to hide his irritation, and* STANTON, *who would do the same but for his disapproval of* HOOK, *listen with good-humoured patience and amusement while he reads the following passage from Artemus Ward.*

“High-Handed Outrage at Utica.”

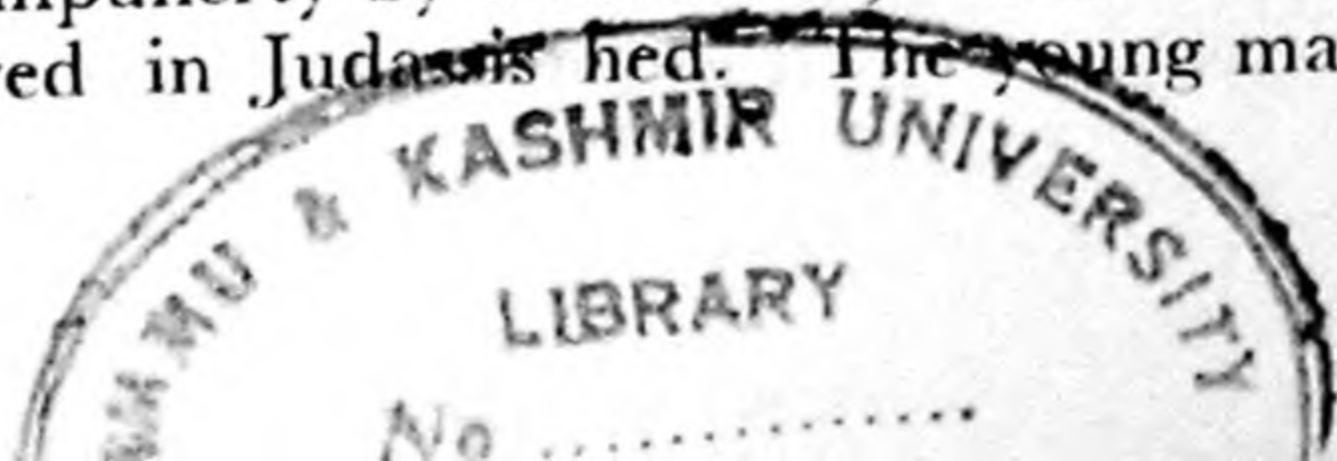
100 “In the Faul of 1856, I showed my show in Utiky, a trooly grate sitty in the State of New York. The people gave me a cordual recepshun. The press was loud in her prases. I day as I was givin a descripshun of my Beests and Snaiks in my usual flowry stile what was my skorn & disgust to see a big burly feller walk up to the cage containin my wax figgers of the Lord's Last Supper, and cease Judas Iscarrot by the feet and drag him out on the ground. He then commenced fur to pound him as hard as he cood.

“‘What under the son are you about?’ cried I.

110 “Sez he, ‘What did you bring this pussylanermus cuss here fur?’ and he hit the wax figger another tremenjis blow on the hed.

“Sez I, ‘You egrejus ass, that air's a wax figger—a representashun of the false ‘Postle.’

“Sez he, ‘That's all very well fur you to say ; but I tell you, old man, that Judas Iscarrot can't show himself in Utiky with impunerty by a darn site,’ with which observashun he kaved in Judas's hed. The young man belonged





to 1 of the first famerlies in Utiky. I sood him, and the Joory brawt in a verdick of Arson in the 3d degree."

STANTON. May we now consider affairs of state ?

120

HOOK. Yes, we may.

LINCOLN. Mr. Hook says, yes, we may.

STANTON. Thank you.

LINCOLN. Oh, no. Thank Mr. Hook.

SEWARD. McClellan is in pursuit of Lee, I suppose.

LINCOLN. You suppose a good deal. But for the first time McClellan has the chance of being in pursuit of Lee, and that's the first sign of their end. If McClellan doesn't take his chance, we'll move Grant down to the job. That will mean delay, but no matter. The mastery has changed 130 hands.

BLAIR. Grant drinks.

LINCOLN. Then tell me the name of his brand. I'll send some barrels to the others. He wins victories.

HOOK. Is there other business ?

LINCOLN. There is. Some weeks ago I showed you a draft I made proclaiming freedom for all slaves.

HOOK. [*aside to Welles.*] I told you so.

LINCOLN. You thought then it was not the time to issue it. I agreed. I think the moment has come. May 140 I read it to you again ? "It is proclaimed that on the first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." That allows three months from to-day. There are clauses dealing with compensation in a separate draft.

HOOK. I must oppose the issue of such a proclamation at this moment in the most unqualified terms. This 150 question should be left until our victory is complete. To thrust it forward now would be to invite dissension when we most need unity.



WELLES. I do not quite understand, Mr. President, why you think this the precise moment.

LINCOLN. Believe me, gentlemen, I have considered this matter with all the earnestness and understanding of which I am capable.

160 HOOK. But when the "New York Tribune" urged you to come forward with a clear declaration six months ago, you rebuked them.

LINCOLN. Because I thought the occasion not the right one. It was useless to issue a proclamation that might be as inoperative as the Pope's bull against the comet. My duty, it has seemed to me, has been to be loyal to a principle, and not to betray it by expressing it in action at the wrong time. That is what I conceive statesmanship to be. For long now I have had two fixed resolves. To  
170 preserve the Union, and to abolish slavery. How to preserve the Union I was always clear, and more than two years of bitterness have not dulled my vision. We have fought for the Union, and we are now winning for the Union. When and how to proclaim abolition I have all this time been uncertain. I am uncertain no longer. A few weeks ago I saw that, too, clearly. So soon, I said to myself, as the rebel army shall be driven out of Maryland, and it becomes plain to the world that victory is assured to us in the end, the time will have come to announce that, with that victory and a vindicated Union, will come aboli-  
180 tion. I made the promise to myself—and to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfil that promise. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This I say without intending anything but respect for any one of you. But I beg you to stand with me in this thing.

HOOK. In my opinion, it's altogether too impetuous.

LINCOLN. One other observation I will make. I know very well that others might in this matter, as in others, do better than I can ; and if I was satisfied that the public



confidence was more fully possessed by any one of them 190  
 than by me, and knew of any constitutional way in which  
 he could be put in my place, he should have it. I would  
 gladly yield it to him. But, though I cannot claim un-  
 divided confidence, I do not know that, all things con-  
 sidered, any other person has more ; and, however this  
 may be, there is no way in which I can have any other  
 man put where I am. I am here ; I must do the best I  
 can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which  
 I feel I ought to take.

STANTON. Could this be left over a short time 200  
 for consideration ?

CHASE. I feel that we should remember that our only  
 public cause at the moment is the preservation of the Union.

HOOK. I entirely agree.

LINCOLN. Gentlemen, we cannot escape history. We  
 of this administration will be remembered in spite of our-  
 selves. No personal significance or insignificance can  
 spare one or another of us. In giving freedom to the slave  
 we assure freedom to the free. We shall nobly "save or  
 meanly lose the last, best hope on earth. 210

*He places the proclamation in front of him.*

"Shall be thenceforward and forever free." Gentlemen,  
 I pray for your support.

*He signs it.*

THE MINISTERS *rise*. SEWARD, WELLES, and BLAIR  
*shake LINCOLN'S hand and go out*. STANTON and  
 CHASE *bow to him, and follow*. HOOK, *the last to*  
*rise, moves away, making no sign.*

LINCOLN. Hook.

HOOK. Yes, Mr. President. 220

LINCOLN. Hook, one cannot help hearing things.

HOOK. I beg your pardon ?

LINCOLN. Hook, there's a way some people have, when  
 a man says a disagreeable thing, of asking him to repeat  
 it, hoping to embarrass him. It's often effective. But I'm



not easily embarrassed. I said one cannot help hearing things.

HOOK. And I do not understand what you mean, Mr. President.

230 LINCOLN. Come, Hook, we're alone. Lincoln is a good enough name. And I think you understand.

HOOK. How should I ?

LINCOLN. Then, plainly, there are intrigues going on.

HOOK. Against the government ?

LINCOLN. No. In it. Against me.

HOOK. Criticism, perhaps.

LINCOLN. To what end ? To better my ways ?

HOOK. I presume that might be the purpose.

LINCOLN. Then, why am I not told what it is ?

240 HOOK. I imagine it's a natural compunction.

LINCOLN. Or ambition ?

HOOK. What do you mean ?

LINCOLN. You think you ought to be in my place.

HOOK. You are well informed.

LINCOLN. You cannot imagine why every one does not see that you ought to be in my place.

HOOK. By what right do you say that ?

LINCOLN. Is it not true ?

HOOK. You take me unprepared. You have me at a disadvantage.

250 LINCOLN. You speak as a very scrupulous man, Hook.

HOOK. Do you question my honour ?

LINCOLN. As you will.

HOOK. Then I resign.

LINCOLN. As a protest against . . ?

HOOK. Your suspicion.

LINCOLN. It is false ?

HOOK. Very well, I will be frank. I mistrust your judgment.

260 LINCOLN. In what ?

HOOK. Generally. You over-emphasise abolition.

LINCOLN. You don't mean that. You mean that you fear possible public feeling against abolition.

HOOKE. It must be persuaded, not forced.

LINCOLN. All the most worthy elements in it are persuaded. But the ungenerous elements make the most noise, and you hear them only. You will run from the terrible name of Abolitionist even when it is pronounced by worthless creatures whom you know you have every reason to despise.

270

HOOKE. You have, in my opinion, failed in necessary firmness in saying what will be the individual penalties of rebellion.

LINCOLN. This is a war. I will not allow it to become a blood-feud.

HOOKE. We are fighting treason. We must meet it with severity.

LINCOLN. We will defeat treason. And I will meet it with conciliation.

HOOKE. It is a policy of weakness.

280

LINCOLN. It is a policy of faith—it is a policy of compassion. [*warmly.*] Hook, why do you plague me with these jealousies? Once before I found a member of my Cabinet working behind my back. But he was disinterested, and he made amends nobly. But, Hook, you have allowed the burden of these days to sour you. I know it all. I've watched you plotting and plotting for authority. And I, who am a lonely man, have been sick at heart. So great is the task God has given to my hand, and so few are my days, and my deepest hunger is always for loyalty in my own house. You have withheld it from me. You have done great service in your office, but you have grown envious. Now you resign, as you did once before when I came openly to you in friendship. And you think that again I shall flatter you and coax you to stay. I don't think I ought to do it. I will not do it. I must take you at your word.

290



HOOK. I am content.

*He turns to go.*

300

LINCOLN. Will you shake hands ?

HOOK. I beg you will excuse me.

*He goes. LINCOLN stands silently for a moment, a travelled, lonely captain. He rings a bell, and a CLERK comes in.*

LINCOLN. Ask Mr. Slaney to come in.

CLERK. Yes, sir.

*He goes. LINCOLN, from the folds of his pockets, produces another book, and holds it unopened. SLANEY comes in.*

310

LINCOLN. I'm rather tired to-day, Slaney. Read to me a little. [*He hands him the book.*] "The Tempest"—you know the passage.

SLANEY. [*reading.*] Our revels now are ended ; these our actors,

As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air ;

320

And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-clapped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

LINCOLN. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life . .

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

FIRST CHRONICLER. Two years again.

Desolation of battle, and long debate,  
Counsels and prayers of men,  
And bitterness of destruction and witless hate

And the shame of lie contending with lie,  
Are spending themselves, and the brain  
That set its lonely chart four years gone by,  
Knowing the word fulfilled,  
Comes with charity and communion to bring  
To reckoning,  
To reconcile and build.

10

THE TWO TOGETHER. What victor coming from the  
field.

Leaving the victim desolate,  
But has a vulnerable shield  
Against the substances of fate?  
That battle's won that leads in chains  
But retribution and despite,  
And bids misfortune count her gains  
Not stricken in a penal night.

His triumph is but bitterness  
Who looks not to the starry doom  
When proud and humble but possess  
The little kingdom of the tomb.  
Who, striking home, shall not forgive,  
Strikes with a weak returning rod,  
Claiming a fond prerogative  
Against the armoury of God.

20

Who knows, and for his knowledge stands  
Against the darkness in dispute,  
And dedicates industrious hands,  
And keeps a spirit resolute,  
Prevailing in the battle, then  
A steward of his word is made,  
To bring it honour among men,  
Or know his captaincy betrayed.

30



## SCENE V

*An April evening in 1865. A farm house near Appomattox.*

GENERAL GRANT, *Commander-in-Chief, under LINCOLN, of the Northern armies, is seated at a table with CAPTAIN MALINS, an aide-de-camp. He is smoking a cigar, and at intervals he replenishes his glass of whisky. DENNIS, an orderly, sits at a table in the corner, writing.*

GRANT. [*consulting a large watch lying in front of him.*] An hour and a half. There ought to be something  
10 more from Meade by now. Dennis.

DENNIS. [*coming to the table.*] Yes, sir.

GRANT. Take these papers to Captain Templeman, and ask Colonel West if the twenty-third are in action yet. Tell the cook to send some soup at ten o'clock. Say it was cold yesterday.

DENNIS. Yes, sir.

*He goes.*

GRANT. Give me that map, Malins.

MALINS *hands him the map at which he is working.*

20 GRANT. [*after studying it in silence.*] Yes. There's no doubt about it. Unless Meade goes to sleep it can only be a question of hours. Lee's a great man, but he can't get out of that.

*Making a ring on the map with his finger.*

MALINS. [*taking the map again.*] This ought to be the end, sir.

GRANT. Yes. If Lee surrenders, we can all pack up for home.

30 MALINS. By God, sir, it will be splendid, won't it, to be back again?

GRANT. By God, sir, it will.

MALINS. I beg your pardon, sir.

GRANT. You're quite right, Malins. My boy goes

to school next week. My word, I may be able to go down with him and see him settled in.

DENNIS *comes back.*

DENNIS. Colonel West says, yes, sir, for the last half hour. The cook says he's sorry, sir. It was a mistake.

GRANT. Tell him to keep his mistakes in the kitchen.

DENNIS. I will, sir.

40

*He goes back to his place.*

GRANT. [*at his papers.*] Those rifles went up this afternoon?

DENNIS. Yes, sir.

*Another ORDERLY comes in.*

ORDERLY. Mr. Lincoln has just arrived, sir. He's in the yard now.

GRANT. All right, I'll come.

THE ORDERLY *goes.* GRANT *risés and crosses to the door, but is met there by LINCOLN and SLANEY.* 50  
LINCOLN, *in top boots and tall hat that has seen many campaigns, shakes hands with GRANT and takes MALINS' salute.*

GRANT. I wasn't expecting you, sir.

LINCOLN. No; but I couldn't keep away. How's it going?

*They sit.*

GRANT. Meade sent word an hour and a half ago that Lee was surrounded all but two miles, which was closing in.

60

LINCOLN. That ought about, to settle it, eh?

GRANT. Unless anything goes wrong in those two miles, sir. I'm expecting a further report from Meade every minute.

LINCOLN. Would there be more fighting?

GRANT. It will probably mean fighting through the night, more or less. But Lee must realise it's hopeless by the morning.

AN ORDERLY. [*entering.*] A despatch, sir.



70 GRANT. Yes.

THE ORDERLY goes, and a YOUNG OFFICER comes in from the field. He salutes and hands a despatch to GRANT.

OFFICER. From General Meade, sir.

GRANT. [taking it.] Thank you.

*He opens it and reads.*

You needn't wait.

THE OFFICER salutes and goes.

Yes, they've closed the ring. Meade gives them ten  
80 hours. It's timed at eight. That's six o'clock in the morning.

*He hands the despatch to LINCOLN.*

LINCOLN. We must be merciful. Bob Lee has been a gallant fellow.

GRANT. [taking a paper.] Perhaps you'll look through this list, sir. I hope it's the last we shall have.

LINCOLN. [taking the paper.] It's a horrible part of the business, Grant. Any shootings?

GRANT. One.

90 LINCOLN. Damn it, Grant, why can't you do without it? No, no, of course not? Who is it?

GRANT. Malins.

MALINS. [opening a book.] William Scott, sir. It's rather a hard case.

LINCOLN. What is it?

MALINS. He had just done a heavy march, sir, and volunteered for double guard duty to relieve a sick friend. He was found asleep at his post.

*He shuts the book.*

100 GRANT. I was anxious to spare him. But it couldn't be done. It was a critical place, at a gravely critical time.

LINCOLN. When is it to be?

MALINS. To-morrow, at daybreak, sir.

LINCOLN. I don't see that it will do him any good to be shot. Where is he?

MALINS. Here, sir.

LINCOLN. Can I go and see him?

GRANT. Where is he?

MALINS. In the barn, I believe, sir.

GRANT. Dennis.

DENNIS. [*coming from his table.*] Yes, sir.

GRANT. Ask them to bring Scott in here.

DENNIS *goes.*

I want to see Colonel West. Malins, ask Templeman if those figures are ready yet.

*He goes, and MALINS follows.*

LINCOLN. Will you, Slaney?

SLANEY *goes.* After a moment, during which LINCOLN takes the book MALINS has been reading from, and looks into it, WILLIAM SCOTT is brought in under guard. He is a boy of twenty.

LINCOLN. [*to the GUARD.*] Thank you. Wait outside, will you?

THE MEN *salute and withdraw.*

Are you William Scott?

SCOTT. Yes, sir.

LINCOLN. You know who I am?

SCOTT. Yes, sir.

LINCOLN. The General tells me you've been court-martialled.

SCOTT. Yes, sir.

LINCOLN. Asleep on guard?

SCOTT. Yes, sir.

LINCOLN. It's a very serious offence.

SCOTT. I know, sir.

LINCOLN. What was it?

SCOTT. [*a pause.*] I couldn't keep awake, sir.

LINCOLN. You'd had a long march?

SCOTT. Twenty-three miles, sir.

LINCOLN. You were doing double guard?

SCOTT. Yes, sir.

110

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LINCOLN. Who ordered you ?

SCOTT. Well, sir, I offered.

LINCOLN. Why ?

SCOTT. Enoch White—he was sick, sir. We come from the same place.

LINCOLN. Where's that ?

SCOTT. Vermont, sir.

LINCOLN. You live there ?

150 SCOTT. Yes, sir. My ; . we've got a farm down there, sir.

LINCOLN. Who has ?

SCOTT. My mother, sir. I've got her photograph, sir.

*He takes it from his pocket.*

LINCOLN. [taking it.] Does she know about this ?

SCOTT. For God's sake, don't sir.

LINCOLN. There, there, my boy. You're not going to be shot.

160 SCOTT. [after a pause.] Not going to be shot, sir !

LINCOLN. No, no.

SCOTT. Not—going—to—be—shot.

*He breaks down, sobbing.*

LINCOLN. [rising and going to him.] There, there. I believe you when you tell me that you couldn't keep awake. I am going to trust you, and send you back to your regiment.

*He goes back to his seat.*

SCOTT. When may I go back, sir ?

170 LINCOLN. You can go back to-morrow. I expect the fighting will be over, though.

SCOTT. Is it over yet, sir.

LINCOLN. Not quite.

SCOTT. Please, sir, let me go back to-night—let me go back to-night.

LINCOLN. Very well.

*He writes.*

Do you know where General Meade is ?

SCOTT. No, sir.

LINCOLN. Ask one of those men to come here. 180

SCOTT *calls one of his guards in.*

LINCOLN. Your prisoner is discharged. Take him at once to General Meade with this.

*He hands a note to the man.*

THE SOLDIER. Yes, sir.

SCOTT. Thank you, sir.

*He salutes and goes out with the SOLDIER.*

LINCOLN. Slaney.

SLANEY. [*outside.*] Yes, sir.

*He comes in.* 190

LINCOLN. What's the time ?

SLANEY. [*looking at the watch on the table.*] Just on half-past nine, sir.

LINCOLN. I shall sleep here for a little. You'd better shake down too. They'll wake us if there's any news.

LINCOLN *wraps himself up on two chairs.* SLANEY *follows suit on a bench.* After a few moments GRANT comes to the door, sees what has happened, blows out the candles quietly, and goes away.

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE FIRST CHRONICLER. Under the stars an end is made, 200

And on the field the southern blade

Lies broken,

And, where strife was, shall union be,

And, where was bondage, liberty.

The word is spoken . .

Night passes.



*The Curtain rises on the same scene, LINCOLN and SLANEY still lying asleep. The light of dawn fills the room.*  
210 THE ORDERLY comes in with two smoking cups of coffee and some biscuits. LINCOLN wakes.

LINCOLN. Good morning.

ORDERLY. Good morning, sir.

LINCOLN. [*taking coffee and biscuits.*] Thank you.

THE ORDERLY turns to SLANEY, who sleeps on, and he hesitates.

LINCOLN. Slaney. [*shouting.*] Slaney.

SLANEY. [*starting up.*] Hullo! What the devil is it? I beg your pardon, sir.

LINCOLN. Not at all. Take a little coffee.

220 SLANEY. Thank you, sir.

*He takes coffee and biscuits. THE ORDERLY goes.*

LINCOLN. Slept well, Slaney?

SLANEY. I feel a little crumpled, sir. I think I fell off once.

LINCOLN. What's the time?

SLANEY. [*looking at the watch.*] Six o'clock, sir.

GRANT comes in.

GRANT. Good morning, sir; good morning, Slaney.

LINCOLN. Good morning, general.

230 SLANEY. Good morning, sir.

GRANT. I didn't disturb you last night. A message has just come from Meade. Lee asked for an armistice at four o'clock.

LINCOLN. [*after a silence.*] For four years life has been but the hope of this moment. It is strange how simple it is when it comes. Grant, you've served the country very truly. And you've made my work possible.

*He takes his hand.*

Thank you.

240 GRANT. Had I failed, the fault would not have been yours, sir. I succeeded because you believed in me.

LINCOLN. Where is Lee?

GRANT. He's coming here. Meade should arrive directly.

LINCOLN. Where will Lee wait?

GRANT. There's a room ready for him. Will you receive him, sir?

LINCOLN. No, no, Grant. That's your affair. You are to mention no political matters. Be generous. But I needn't say that. 250

GRANT. [*taking a paper from his pocket.*] Those are the terms I suggest.

LINCOLN. [*reading.*] Yes, yes. They do you honour. *He places the paper on the table. An ORDERLY comes in.*

ORDERLY. General Meade is here, sir.

GRANT. Ask him to come here.

ORDERLY. Yes, sir.

*He goes.*

GRANT. I learnt a good deal from Robert Lee in 260 early days. He's a better man than most of us. This business will go pretty near the heart, sir.

LINCOLN. I'm glad it's to be done by a brave gentleman, Grant.

GENERAL MEADE *and* CAPTAIN SONE, *his aide-de-camp, come in. MEADE salutes.*

LINCOLN. Congratulations, Meade. You've done well.

MEADE. Thank you, sir.

GRANT. Was there much more fighting?

MEADE. Pretty hot for an hour or two. 270

GRANT. How long will Lee be?

MEADE. Only a few minutes, I should say, sir.

GRANT. You said nothing about terms?

MEADE. No, sir.

LINCOLN. Did a boy Scott come to you?

MEADE. Yes, sir. He went into action at once. He was killed, wasn't he, Sone?

SONE. Yes, sir.



LINCOLN. Killed? It's a queer world, Grant.

280 MEADE. Is there any proclamation to be made, sir, about the rebels?

GRANT. I—

LINCOLN. No, no. I'll have nothing of hanging or shooting these men, even the worst of them. Frighten them out of the country, open the gates, let down the bars, scare them off. Shoo!

*He flings out his arms.*

Good-bye, Grant. Report at Washington as soon as you can.

*He shakes hands with him.*

290 Good-bye, gentlemen. Come along, Slaney.

MEADE *salutes and* LINCOLN *goes, followed by* SLANEY.

GRANT. Who is with Lee?

MEADE. Only one of his staff, sir.

GRANT. You might see Malins, will you, Sone, and let us know directly General Lee comes.

SONE. Yes, sir.

*He goes out.*

GRANT. Well, Meade, it's been a big job.

300 MEADE. Yes, sir.

GRANT. We've had courage and determination. And we've had wits, to beat a great soldier. I'd say that to any man. But it's Abraham Lincoln, Meade, who has kept us a great cause clean to fight for. It does a man's heart good to know he's given victory to such a man to handle. A glass, Meade? [*Pouring out whisky.*] No? [*Drinking.*]

Do you know, Meade, there were fools who wanted me to oppose Lincoln for the next Presidency. I've got  
310 my vanities, but I know better than that.

MALINS *comes in.*

MALINS. General Lee is here, sir.

GRANT. Meade, will General Lee do me the honour of meeting me here.

*Meade salutes and goes.*

GRANT. Where the deuce is my hat, Malins? And sword.

MALINS. Here, sir.

MALINS gets them for him. MEADE and SONE come in, and stand by the door at attention. ROBERT LEE, 320 General-in-Chief of the Confederate forces, comes in, followed by one of his staff. The days of critical anxiety through which he has just lived have marked themselves on LEE'S face, but his groomed and punctilious toilet contrasts pointedly with GRANT'S unconsidered appearance. The two commanders face each other. GRANT salutes, and LEE replies.

GRANT. Sir, you have given me occasion to be proud of my opponent.

LEE. I have not spared my strength. I acknowledge 330 its defeat.

GRANT. You have come—

LEE. To ask upon what terms you will accept surrender. Yes.

GRANT. [*taking the paper from the table and handing it to LEE.*] They are simple. I hope you will not find them ungenerous.

LEE. [*having read the terms.*] You are magnanimous, sir. May I make one submission?

GRANT. It would be a privilege if I could consider it. 340

LEE. You allow our officers to keep their horses. That is gracious. Our cavalry troopers' horses also are their own.

GRANT. I understand. They will be needed on the farms. It shall be done.

LEE. I thank you. It will do much towards conciliating our people. I accept your terms.

LEE unbuckles his sword, and offers it to GRANT.

GRANT. No, no. I should have included that. It has but one rightful place. I beg you.



LEE *replaces his sword.* GRANT *offers his hand and*  
LEE *takes it. They salute, and LEE turns to go.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE TWO CHRONICLERS. A wind blows in the night,  
And the pride of the rose is gone,  
It laboured, and was delight.  
And rains fell, and shone  
Suns of the summer days,  
And dews washed the bud,  
And thanksgiving and praise  
Was the rose in our blood.

10

And out of the night it came,  
A wind, and the rose fell,  
Shattered its heart of flame,  
And how shall June tell  
The glory that went with May,  
How shall the full year keep  
The beauty that ere its day  
Was blasted into sleep?

20

Roses. Oh, heart of man :  
Courage, that in the prime  
Looked on truth, and began  
Conspiracies with time  
To flower upon the pain  
Of dark and envious earth. . .  
A wind blows, and the brain  
Is the dust that was its birth.

What shall the witness cry,  
He who has seen alone  
With imagination's eye  
The darkness overthrown?

Hark : from the long eclipse  
The wise words come —  
And wind blows, and the lips  
Of prophecy are dumb.

30

## SCENE VI

*The evening of April 14th, 1865. The small lounge of a theatre. On the far side are the doors of three private boxes. There is silence for a few moments. Then the sound of applause comes from the auditorium beyond. The box doors are opened. In the centre box can be seen LINCOLN and STANTON, MRS. LINCOLN, another lady, and an officer, talking together.*

*The occupants come out from the other boxes into the lounge, where small knots of people have gathered from different directions, and stand or sit talking 10 busily.*

A LADY. Very amusing, don't you think?

HER COMPANION. Oh, yes. But it's hardly true to life, is it?

ANOTHER LADY. Isn't that dark girl clever? What's her name?

A GENTLEMAN. [*consulting his programme.*] Eleanor Crowne.

ANOTHER GENTLEMAN. There's a terrible draught, isn't there? I shall have a stiff neck. 20

HIS WIFE. You should keep your scarf on.

THE GENTLEMAN. It looks so odd.

ANOTHER LADY. The President looks very happy this evening, doesn't he?

ANOTHER. No wonder, is it? He must be a proud man.

*A young man, dressed in black, passes among the people, glancing furtively into LINCOLN'S box and disappears. It is JOHN WILKES BOOTH.*



30 A LADY. [*greeting another.*] Ah, Mrs. Bennington, when do you expect your husband back?

*They drift away. SUSAN, carrying cloaks and wraps, comes in. She goes to the box, and speaks to MRS. LINCOLN. Then she comes away, and sits down apart from the crowd to wait.*

A YOUNG MAN. I rather think of going on the stage myself. My friends tell me I'm uncommon good. Only I don't think my health would stand it.

40 A GIRL. Oh, it must be a very easy life. Just acting —that's easy enough.

*A cry of "Lincoln" comes through the auditorium. It is taken up, with shouts of "The President", "Speech", "Abraham Lincoln", "Father Abraham", and so on. The conversation in the lounge stops as the talkers turn to listen. After a few moments, LINCOLN is seen to rise. There is a burst of cheering. The people in the lounge stand round the box door. LINCOLN holds up his hand, and there is a sudden silence.*

50

LINCOLN. My friends, I am touched, deeply touched, by this mark of your good-will. After four dark and difficult years, we have achieved the great purpose for which we set out. General Lee's surrender to General Grant leaves but one confederate force in the field, and the end is immediate and certain. [*Cheers.*] I have but little to say at this moment. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. But as events have come before me, I have seen them always with one faith. We have preserved the American  
60 Union, and we have abolished a great wrong. [*Cheers.*] The task of reconciliation, of setting order where there is now confusion, of bringing about a settlement at once just and merciful, and of directing the life of a reunited country into prosperous channels of good-will and gener-



osity, will demand all our wisdom, all our loyalty. It is the proudest hope of my life that I may be of some service in this work. [*Cheers.*] Whatever it may be, it can be but little in return for all the kindness and forbearance that I have received. With malice towards none, with charity for all, it is for us to resolve that this nation, under 70 God, shall have a new birth of freedom ; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

*There is a great sound of cheering. It dies down, and a boy passes through the lounge and calls out "Last act, ladies and gentleman". The people disperse, and the box doors are closed. SUSAN is left alone and there is silence.*

*After a few moments, BOOTH appears. He watches SUSAN and sees that her gaze is fixed away from him. 80 He creeps along to the centre box and disengages a hand from under his cloak. It holds a revolver. Poising himself, he opens the door with a swift movement, fires, flings the door to close again, and rushes away. The door is thrown open again, and the OFFICER follows in pursuit. Inside the box, MRS. LINCOLN is kneeling by her husband, who is supported by STANTON. A DOCTOR runs across the lounge and goes into the box. There is complete silence in the theatre. The door closes again. 90*

SUSAN. [*who has run to the box door, and is kneeling there, sobbing.*] Master, master. No, no, not my master.

*The other box doors have opened, and the occupants with others have collected in little terror-struck groups in the lounge. Then the centre door opens, and STANTON comes out, closing it behind him.*

STANTON. Now he belongs to the ages.



THE CHRONICLERS *speak*.

100

FIRST CHRONICLER. Events go by. And upon circumstance

Disaster strikes with the blind sweep of chance,  
And this our mimic action was a theme.  
Kinsmen, as life is, clouded as a dream.

SECOND CHRONICLER. But, as we spoke, presiding  
everywhere

Upon events was one man's character.  
And that endures ; it is the token sent  
Always to man for man's own government.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

## NOTES





## NOTES

**The Play.**—Written by John Drinkwater in July-August 1918, it was first produced, under his direction, on October 12 that year at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. In February 1919, it was transferred to the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, where it ran for a year, drawing crowds to this small suburban theatre and amply rewarding the enterprise of its manager Mr. (afterwards Sir) Nigel Playfair. When produced later in the United States, Lincoln's fellow-countrymen stamped it with their generous approval, and gave both play and author their accustomed cordial welcome. Since then it has been acted, read, and studied all over the English-speaking world.

In publishing the text of the play, which was issued on the same day as the first performance, Drinkwater prefaced it with "one or two observations", from which the following may be quoted :

First, my purpose is that not of the historian but of the dramatist. The historical presentation of my hero has been faithfully made in many volumes ; notably, in England, by Lord Charnwood in a monograph<sup>1</sup> that gives a masterly analysis of Lincoln's career and character and is, it seems to me, a model of what the historian's work should be. To this book, I am gratefully indebted for the material of my play. But while I have, I hope, done nothing to traverse history, I have freely telescoped its events, and imposed invention upon its movement,

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<sup>1</sup>*Abraham Lincoln*, by Lord Charnwood ( Constable & Co., Ltd., 1916 ). Lord Charnwood was formerly (as Mr. Godfrey R. Benson) a Liberal M.P. He is brother to Sir Frank Benson, the Shakespearean actor. Drinkwater's play is dedicated to Lord Charnwood. In the following notes, references to the book are indicated by "(C.)".



in such ways as I needed to shape the dramatic significance of my subject.

Secondly, my purpose is, again, that of the dramatist, not that of the political philosopher. The issue of secession was a very intricate one, upon which high and generous opinions may be in conflict, but that I may happen to have or lack personal sympathy with Lincoln's policy and judgment in this matter is nothing. My concern is with the profoundly dramatic interest of his character, and with the inspiring example of a man who handled war nobly and with imagination.

The dates given above have a significance that should be borne in mind by present-day readers. Lord Charnwood's book was published in the middle of the European War of 1914-18, but so strong was its appeal that five editions had been called for by the time Drinkwater wrote. The play was first performed just a month before the Armistice (November 11, 1918) when the Allies' victory was in sight, and the recent reinforcement of their depleted man-power by fresh and splendidly equipped troops from America was very much in English minds. The moment was ripe for this vivid dramatic picture of Lincoln and the American Civil War.

**The Structure of an Historical Play.**—In point of structure and the use made of historical fact by a dramatist, it is useful to compare *Abraham Lincoln* with a typical historical play such as Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Both plays present a series of episodes mostly occurring in time of war, based on actual records, and grouped round the hero so as to illustrate his career and his character. In both, while the principals are historical, the dramatist creates a number of minor parts to represent typical people of the period, whom he uses as mouthpieces to record points of view known to have been prevalent at the time. Further, both dramatists employ speakers of poetical interludes ( "Chorus" in *Henry V*, the "Two Chroniclers" here ), whose function is partly to link together the acts or scenes and indicate the passage of



time or change of scene, and partly to comment on the deeper meanings of the drama and its moral purpose—in this latter function resembling the Chorus in Greek drama.

## SCENE I

*Line*

1. **Abraham Lincoln** was born February 12, 1809 (in which year also Charles Darwin, Alfred Tennyson and William Ewart Gladstone were born), in a log-cabin in the backwoods of Kentucky, where his grandfather Abraham had settled about 1780 ; and for the first nineteen years of his life was at work on his father's farm in Ohio. After various experiences as clerk, storekeeper, and postmaster, he took up politics and studied law. From 1834 to 1842 he was a member of the Legislature, but then retired to devote himself to the law. He had moved to **Springfield**, which from 1836 was the capital of the State of Illinois,<sup>1</sup> in 1837, and five years later had there married Mary Todd, the **Mrs. Lincoln** of this scene.
2. **Mr. Stone** and **Mr. Cuffney**, types of Lincoln's old friends, in conversation with **Susan**, at once tell us the situation (see ll. 20-23), with sidelights on the characters of Lincoln and his wife.
46. The allusion to **John Brown** (of world-wide fame in the song quoted, l. 81) introduces the subject of slavery. In October 1859, John Brown, a Kansas farmer of strict Puritan ideals, with a band of Abolitionists and negroes, had invaded the slave States in an attempt to rescue slaves, and had seized the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. U.S. troops under the afterwards famous General Robert E. Lee had easily controlled the raid, shooting down many, and capturing the wounded John

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced "Ill-i-noy", occasionally "Ill-i-onys".



*Line*

- Brown. He was hanged on December 2, 1859, for treason.
66. These **brave words** were actually used by John Brown just before his death. In lines 73-4, the commanding officer's remark is also historical.
72. Thomas J. Jackson, famous as "**Stonewall Jackson**", General, military genius and an austere Puritan ; in the Civil War went with Virginia, leading the South ; killed at the battle of Chancellorsville, aged only 39, in 1863.
133. **Oregon** Territory, on the Pacific coast, was apportioned to the Union by treaty with Great Britain in 1846, becoming a free State in 1859. The offer of its Governorship to Lincoln was actually **stopped** by his wife, who saw that it would cut him off from politics.
141. **Seward** : see note 1. 325.
- 150-52. Characteristic features of the real Lincoln ; see his entry, line 167 and line 177. His bad hat was notorious ; he did stuff his papers into his pockets and the lining of his hat ; he did tend to "god-darn" when angry (see ll. 199, 201). He was a tall man, 6 feet 4 inches, and somewhat lanky. His manners were as odd as his appearance was uncouth : that he was aware of it is shown in his remark, line 351.
237. This speech gives in the briefest form the essence of Lincoln's attitude to the great problem that faced America (see Preliminary Note, p. 4). Dramatically, its importance is emphasised by the simple homely dialogue between husband and wife that follows its statement.
290. etc. This delegation is a historical fact, though the names of the delegates are invented.
306. The **Republican** party evolved from the old Whig party, originally on the basis of a determination that there should be no further extension of slavery ;



*Line*

consequently it consisted of Northerners only at first. A **Convention** (i.e., meeting) is part of the machinery of the Presidential election.

The President, the head of the Executive in America, is elected for a period of four years. The Constitution originally laid down in detail the method of his election—in brief, that the people should choose “electors” who should elect the President. But the growth of Party Conventions made the election of the President, almost from the start, depend entirely on the popular vote, because in practice when the people of each State elect “electors”, they know for which Presidential candidate those electors will vote. (See also note, l. 428).

310-13. **The Democrats have split**: this has already been alluded to in line 145. The “split” had occurred at the Democratic Convention at Charleston in the April of this year, on the subject of slavery, so that there were two sections, Northern and Southern. Consequently “it had become fairly certain that whoever might be chosen as the Republican candidate would be President of the United States” (C.).

325. **Seward and Hook**: William Seward, a considerable figure later in this play, had been Governor of New York State, “the best training ground for the Presidency” (C.), and was Lincoln’s strongest competitor. As will be seen, he accepted a post in the Cabinet of his rival Lincoln and was admirably loyal. **Hook** is not a historical character (see note, Scene IV, l. 219). The other strong candidate was Salmon P. Chase, who also appears in his own character in Lincoln’s Cabinet (Scenes II and IV).

352. This is another important statement of Lincoln’s attitude. He said in a speech in Kansas: “We want and must have a national policy as to slavery



*Line*

which deals with it as being a wrong. Whoever would prevent slavery becoming national and perpetual yields all when he yields to a policy which treats it either as being right, or as being a matter of indifference."

357. **We will give slavery no approval :** one of Lincoln's most noted statements of his position was made in February 1860, in a memorable address in the Cooper Institute in New York ; "an incomparably masterly statement of the then political situation". The speech "takes the plain principle that slavery is wrong, and draws the plain inference that it is idle to seek for common ground with men who say it is right" (C.).

360. **A trip to New Orleans :** Lincoln had made two trips down the Mississippi in his youth. One of his companions, John Hanks, later recorded this incident of May 1831. Lincoln's horror was expressed in the words recorded (ll. 364-5) at the auction of slaves in New Orleans.

380. This remark also was actually made by one of the delegates.

428. In the interval between this scene and the next, Lincoln was duly elected President, on November 6, 1860, and we see him as such through the rest of the play.

One result of the American system of election (see note, l. 306) is that often the total of the original popular votes for the President elected by the "electors" may be less than those cast for the other candidates. Lincoln was in this case elected by 180 electors, who represented 1,186,000 popular votes ; whereas the 123 electors who supported his three opponents represented no less than 2,810,000 people ; that is, Lincoln was the choice of only 40 per cent

of the voters of the country. (See C. F. Strong's *Modern Political Constitutions*, pp. 104-6, 239-41.) His supporters were the "free" Northern States exclusively. "The election of Lincoln was greeted throughout the South with a howl of derision" (C.).

## SCENE II

*Line*

1. **A year later** : 1861.
4. **The Confederate State** : the Southern States which had seceded.
11. **Six** : see Preliminary Note, p. 4.
- 15-20. **Fort Sumter** was the principal fort in the harbour of Charleston, in South Carolina. It was now held by Major Anderson (see II. 288, 312, etc.), and was being threatened by General **Beauregard** for the Confederates, who claimed the fort. The debate whether the garrison should evacuate it or not—the problem which met Lincoln as soon as he became President—of course took much longer than the time of this scene into which the dramatist compresses it. Ultimately, on April 12, 1861, the troops of South Carolina fired on Fort Sumter, and the outbreak of war followed.
26. Lincoln had made his **inaugural address** on March 4 ; his first draft of it, with many amendments and suggestions by Seward, has been preserved. He said : "The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government . . . beyond what may be necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere." (See also note, ll. 198-203.)
41. This scene, besides the debate on Fort Sumter, exhibits the relations between Lincoln and a **certain member** of the Cabinet—Seward himself.



*Line*

90. The two dialogues from here to line 286, first between the President, his Secretary of State, and the two commissioners (ll. 90-217), and the second between Lincoln and Seward (ll. 218-286), form a dramatic compression of actual negotiations that occupied several weeks. We see Seward being **not unsympathetic** (l. 67) to the Southerners' case, but obviously not at ease when Lincoln enters unexpectedly and characteristically puts his case **naked** (l. 159) as **head of the Government** (l. 135). He then with equal outspokenness rebukes Seward for wavering, and stiffens his resolution.
184. This remark was in fact made some years earlier by a Southern Senator to a Northern one, and the Southerner "was surprised that the Northerner cheerfully accepted this position" (C.)
197. **We won't break up**, etc. This sentence was used by Lincoln four years before this date.
- 198-203. The sentences from **In your hands to bonds of affection** are taken from the Inaugural Address (see note above, l. 26).
209. Electric telegraphy at this date was still something of a novelty.
274. This **paper** was as a matter of fact sent by Seward to Lincoln on April 1, 1861, and contained the phrases here quoted from it.
285. Seward here exhibits his real honesty. Shortly after this episode he wrote to his wife "The President is the best of us". Lincoln was equally generous in keeping the matter to himself : the tearing up of Seward's paper is dramatic ; but it is a fact that no one except Lincoln's private secretary "knew anything about Seward's abortive rebellion against Lincoln till after they both were dead" (C.).
288. **Anderson** : see note above, ll. 15-20.



*Line*

297. For **Chase** and **Blair** see lines 389-90 below.
313. Anderson's appeal for help actually reached Lincoln the day after his Inauguration, and named "a few weeks" as the time for which he could hold out. For the purpose of the drama, the appeal is here made more urgent.
326. **Scott** : General Winfield Scott, who had brilliantly subdued Mexico in 1847, was chief military adviser to Lincoln's Cabinet.
385. This famous passage occurs in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, IV, iii, 218, etc.
399. **Cameron** of Pennsylvania was now Secretary for War, although he was removed from office at the end of the year (see note, scene IV, II. 2, 3). **Smith** of Indiana was secretary of the Interior, and **Welles** of Connecticut Secretary of the Navy. For **Hook** see notes, Scene I, line 325, and Scene IV, Line 219.
440. Scott had in fact given this opinion when Anderson's appeal came (see l. 313 above).
458. When Lincoln put this vital question, "Blair said yes emphatically ; Chase said yes in a qualified way. The other five members of the Cabinet said no . . . Lincoln reserved his decision" (C.).
491. The relief of Fort Sumter arrived too late ; Anderson capitulated on April 4, 1861. (Four years later, on April 14, Lincoln was assassinated.) But the Confederates had fired on the Union flag, and the North, expecting an easy victory, went to war.

The first two years of the war on the whole favoured the Confederates (the south) ; Lee and Stonewall Jackson at the end of 1862 heavily defeated the Northern army at Fredericksburg. But in the next year, after Jackson's death (see note, Scene I, I. 72), Lee in attempting the invasion of Pennsylvania met with disaster at Gettysburg (July 1-3,



1863). At the same time in the west Grant captured Vicksburg, on the Mississippi ; and these successes renewed the hopes of the North.

### SCENE III

This Scene is partly imaginary (ll. 1-243) and partly historical (ll. 247-end). The warlike **Mrs. Blow** and the peace-loving **Mrs. Otherly** are two strongly contrasted types, chosen by the dramatist to show us Lincoln's reactions to their views and sentiments. It must be remembered that when the play was first performed, both types were very familiar to the war-time audience.

#### *Line*

2. **The White House** is the President's residence at Washington.
24. Two years have passed since the last scene, and Lincoln's reputation has increased. "It seems to have been about this time [1862-3] that 'old Abe' or 'Uncle Abe' began to be known among common people by the significant name of 'Father Abraham' " (C.).
195. The **paper** is obviously official communication of her son's death : this also would be only too readily recognised by the war-time audience.
242. **Frederick Douglass** was a well-known negro preacher (see l. 323), "then reputed to be the ablest man ever born as a negro slave" (C.). He came to see the President at Lincoln's special request.
330. Abolition of slavery and emancipation of slaves are dealt with in Scene IV (see notes thereon).
349. There were 100,000 coloured men serving in the Northern army by the end of 1863, and 180,000 by the end of the war.
365. "Lincoln had indeed won his [Douglass's] warm approval when he told him 'with a quiver in his



*Line*

voice' of his horror of killing men in cold blood for what had been done by others" (C.).

395. Douglass is known to have said as he came away from Lincoln, "He treated me as a man. He did not let me feel for a moment that there was any difference in the colour of our skins."

### Chroniclers between Scenes III and IV

- 9-12. These four lines have been widely quoted. In particular, Professor Lascelles Abercrombie quoted them in his Address given at the Memorial Service for John Drinkwater at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church, April 2, 1937, and added that "the words might serve as a motto for the series of his plays".

### SCENE IV

1. **About the same date.** As a matter of history, the Cabinet meeting here shown was held five days after the Battle of Antietam. In this scene it is supposed, for dramatic reasons, to be held on the day after the news of the Northern victory had reached Washington.
- 2, 3. **Cameron** (see note, Scene II, l. 399) had proved to be incapable on the business side of war administration and had been removed from the War Office in December 1861. **Stanton** was an eminent lawyer, who on one occasion previously, when Lincoln was practising law, had been markedly rude to him. He was still contemptuous of Lincoln, and publicly critical of the conduct of the war. Nevertheless Lincoln characteristically appointed him to succeed Cameron.
10. General George B. **McClellan**, at this time aged thirty-four, was spoken of as "the young Napoleon". But his victory at Antietam was followed by delays (see note, l. 128 below), and he soon fell out of favour.



• *Line*

In 1864 he stood as candidate for the Presidency, when Lincoln was elected for his second period of office. Lee is of course the Southern General Robert E. Lee, whom we see later in the play (Scene V).

11. **Antietam Creek** ("creek" in American and Colonial use means a small river or tributary stream) flows into the river Potomac about 60 miles N.E. of Washington. McClellan attacked Lee's position here on September 17, 1862, and on the following morning Lee was forced to retreat.
18. Lincoln's **Proclamation** of Emancipation was read by him in first draft to the Cabinet on July 22, 1862, and was signed (see l. 214) on September 22.
42. These words of Lincoln were actually written, in August 1862, in his reply to an "open letter" published in the *New York Tribune* by Horace Greeley, its famous editor (see l. 159).
90. **Artemus Ward**, "the author," Lord Charnwood says, "who almost vied with Shakespeare in Lincoln's affections", was the pen-name adopted by Charles Farrer Browne (1836-67) when, having risen in the printing trade from type-setting to writing comic sketches and tales, he joined the staff of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Ohio. In many of his papers, as in this one, the fiction is that he is a travelling showman, exhibiting both "beests" and "snakes" and "wax figgers". In 1860 he began to write for *Vanity Fair*, a New York humorous paper; then he took to travelling with a comic lecture. He visited Salt Lake City, the home of the Mormons, and in Virginia City met a young man on the staff of the local paper named Samuel L. Clemens, who was to become famous as "Mark Twain". In 1866 Artemus Ward, now widely known, came to London to give his comic lecture (nominally on the



*Line*

Mormons), illustrated with a "panorama" so badly painted that he made a jest of its badness. He lectured to packed houses at the now-demolished Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly (afterwards the home of Maskelyne and Cook's conjuring entertainment) during November and December 1866, also contributing eight papers to *Punch*. But he was already a sick man, showing all the signs of rapid consumption, and in spite of the care of devoted friends died at Southampton early in 1867 at the age of thirty-one.

It is a fact that Lincoln opened this Cabinet meeting by reading this particular passage aloud to the members. As it was **Artemus Ward's latest** it was doubtless read from a paper, not from a **small book** (l. 78). It is on record that the reading pleased all the Ministers except Stanton (see his sarcastic remark, l. 120), and that it did help to **compose** Lincoln's mind.

128. Lincoln had in fact visited McClellan on the battlefield of Antietam in the five days' interval between the victory and the Cabinet meeting (see note, l. 1). He returned convinced that McClellan would pursue Lee at once; but Lee was allowed to retire across the Potomac, while McClellan lay encamped for a fortnight. At last on October 28 he began to throw his army across the river, took a week to do so, and was removed from his command on November 5.

129-32. **Grant** : General Ulysses S. Grant (whom we shall see in Scene V) was a remarkable man. Brought up as a country lad on a farm, his father had sent him to the military academy at West Point, and as a young officer he had served with marked success in the Mexican War (see note, Scene V, l. 260). Retiring then from the Army, he tried farming and other employments but failed at them all; when the



*Line*

Civil War broke out he was a ne'er-do-well vaguely occupied in his father's leather business. At this time **Grant drinks** (l. 132) was true ; but the accusation ceased to be true when on rejoining the Army Grant pulled himself together, and, backed by Lincoln, succeeded so well that he became commander-in-chief of the Northern forces (see note at opening of Scene V). He had many detractors, but Lincoln appreciated him because "the sense that the war could be put through and must be put through possessed his [Grant's] soul" (C.). In 1869 Grant became eighteenth President of the United States.

133-4. In saying this Lincoln was adapting a similar witty remark made by George II about General James Wolfe, the captor of Quebec.

141. These are of course only the essential words of the Proclamation (see note l. 18 above).

163. Lincoln had said, in his reply in August 1862, to a deputation from the Churches of Chicago that came to urge emancipation : "What good would a proclamation of emancipation from me do, especially as we are now situated ? I do not want to issue a document that the whole world will see must necessarily be inoperative like the Pope's Bull against the comet."

The legendary **Pope's Bull** (proclamation) **against the comet** is parallel to King Canute's attempt to stop the rise of the tide.

175-84. These words, and the whole of Lincoln's next speech, lines 187-99, are from actual records of what he said at this Cabinet meeting.

219. **Hook**, as pointed out above (see note, Scene I, l. 325), is not a historical character ; he is used in this scene with the President (ll.219-301) to illustrate the kind of quarrel amongst the Ministers with which Lincoln had to deal more than once. In par-



*Line*

ticular there was about this time a crisis in which certain Senators, encouraged by Chase, made an attack on Seward. Seward handed his resignation to Lincoln, and Lincoln kept it private. When the Senators' deputation came to Lincoln to express grievances against Seward, they were gravelled to find Seward no longer a Minister ; and Chase, as the principal Minister left, felt bound to defend the absent Seward from the attack which he had himself helped to promote. The deputation withdrew disappointed, and the next day Chase also resigned. But such was Lincoln's power that he persuaded both Seward and Chase to continue in the public service.

To some extent Hook represents Chase, of whom Lord Charnwood says : "Lincoln had complete confidence in him as Finance Minister, and could not easily have replaced him. But this handsome, dignified, and righteous person was unhappily a sneak."

312. *The Tempest*, Act IV, Scene iii. lines 147-57. This famous speech of Prospero was one of John Drinkwater's favourites, and as such was read among others at the Memorial Service held after his death.

## SCENE V

As the chroniclers tell us, two years again have passed. This scene opens in April 1865. On March 4, Lincoln had been elected President for the second time, four weeks before the end of the war, and six weeks before his death.

Grant's capture of Vicksburg in July 1863 (see note at end of Scene II), was followed by other successes in the west. Grant's persistence made him conspicuous amongst the Union generals, and in 1864 led to his being given supreme command of the Northern army. Leaving General Sherman in charge in the west, Grant came east



to take over command of the Northern army on the Potomac ; and after several reverses, and a long siege of Lee's strong position in the single large fortress of Richmond and Petersburg, Grant and Sherman between them forced Lee to evacuate Richmond, the Confederate capital in Virginia, on April 2-3, 1865. Lee's surrender, which ended the war, is shown in this scene.

*Line*

1. **Appomattox** : Lee, driven from Richmond, was attempting to link up with Confederate forces in the south by way of the Appomattox river ; but Grant pursued, harried and surrounded him. On April 9, "Lee found himself at Appomattox Court House, some seventy miles west of Petersburg, surrounded beyond hope of escape" (C.).
10. **Meade** : General George Meade, who two years before had defeated Lee at Gettysburg, had been ordered by Grant to dog Lee's footsteps wherever he went.
33. **My boy goes to school** : "Grant did not wait to set foot in the capital [Richmond] he had conquered, but the main business being over, posted off with all haste to see his son settled in at school" (C.).
50. Lincoln was invited by Grant, who had just taken his son Robert Lincoln on to his staff, to visit his headquarters at City Point. Lincoln was there from late in March till April 8.
93. **William Scott** : the whole of this episode is historical, but it had taken place in 1862 in another field of the war—the "Peninsula Campaign" of April-July, 1862. (The peninsula is in Virginia, between York River on the north and the James on the south, with Richmond at the base.) Otherwise all the details of Scott's story are as represented here ; but the play omits a fine feature of the original story. Lincoln, having told Scott that he was not going to be shot, added : "I have been put to



*Line*

a great deal of trouble on your account ; now, what I want to know is, how are you going to pay my bill ?” Scott, confused by this sudden reprieve from death, replied that with help from his family and friends he might be able to raise five or six hundred dollars. Lincoln said his bill was a great deal more than that ; and there was only one man in the world who could pay it—William Scott. “If from this day William Scott does his duty, so that when he comes to die, he can look me in the face, as he does now, and say ‘I have kept my promise and I have done my duty as a soldier,’ then my debt will be paid.” Scott promised, and when fatally wounded not long after (see ll. 275-9 of this scene), managed to send a message to Lincoln to say he had kept his promise and died thanking Lincoln for his kindness.

200. These lines of the chronicler merely mark the passage of the night ; the scene remains unchanged.
260. Most of the leading commanders in the war, whether North or South, had been apprenticed to arms at West Point, the United States military college. Grant and Lee had both served in the Mexican War of 1845.
283. This remark of Lincoln’s had actually been made at his last Cabinet meeting, held in Washington on the morning of his death, April 14. He ended : “ ‘Shoo !’ throwing up his large hands like a man scaring sheep” (C.).
308. **Wanted me to oppose Lincoln** : this is a fact ; but Grant was too good a soldier to leave his proper work.
324. “Those present recalled afterwards the contrast of the stately Lee and the plain, ill-dressed Grant arriving mud-splashed in his haste” (C.).
328. The scene of Lee’s surrender is condensed in the play from what actually occurred : Grant, Lee and Meade, former comrades in arms, fell into talk of old army



*Line*

times, almost forgetting the business in hand. The details about the trooper's horses, and of Lee's sword, are from actual record.

### SCENE VI

1. **April 14** was Good Friday, a day not observed in America as it is in England, for in the evening Lincoln and his wife went to the theatre. General Grant and his wife were to have accompanied them, but changed their minds ; Lincoln was attended by a young officer, Major Rathbone, and his fiancée.
12. **Very amusing** : the play was Tom Taylor's *Our American Cousin*, which had been produced in New York in 1858. It contains the famous character Lord Dundreary (a part created by Sothorn) who gave his name to the "Dundreary whiskers," long side-whiskers worn without a beard. Tom Taylor became editor of *Punch* in 1874.
29. **John Wilkes Booth** : a younger brother of the famous American tragedian, Edwin Booth (who at this time was acting Hamlet in Boston). John Booth, of the same profession as his brother, was also a political fanatic of Confederate sympathies, and leader of a small group who aimed at killing not only Lincoln, but also the Vice-President Andrew Johnson (Lincoln's successor in the Presidency) and Seward. Seward was in fact attacked on this same night by another conspirator and badly wounded, but survived.
- 41-9. The theatre (Ford's, in Washington) was full of officers newly returned from the war, and everyone was eager to see Lincoln. He made no speech in the theatre ; but the dramatic effect of this ovation immediately preceding his assassination is obvious.
54. **One Confederate force in the field** : in North



*Line*

Carolina, under General Joseph Johnston, who shortly afterwards surrendered to General Sherman.

69. This concluding sentence is composed of authentic phrases spoken by Lincoln on separate occasions. **With malice toward none, with charity for all** is taken from his Second Inaugural Speech, March 4, 1865, delivered when he took office for the second time—one of the finest examples of his oratory. The final words, from **that this nation to perish from the earth**, are introduced here with full justification, as the crown of Lincoln's work : actually they were spoken on November 9, 1863, at the dedication of a National Cemetery on the field of Gettysburg. Following the formal two-hour speech by Edward Everett, the most famous American orator of the day, Lincoln was called upon for a few words, and uttered, apparently impromptu, "a classic that would endure with the English language", as Lord Charnwood says. It should be read in full :

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or to detract. The world will little note nor long remem-



*Line*

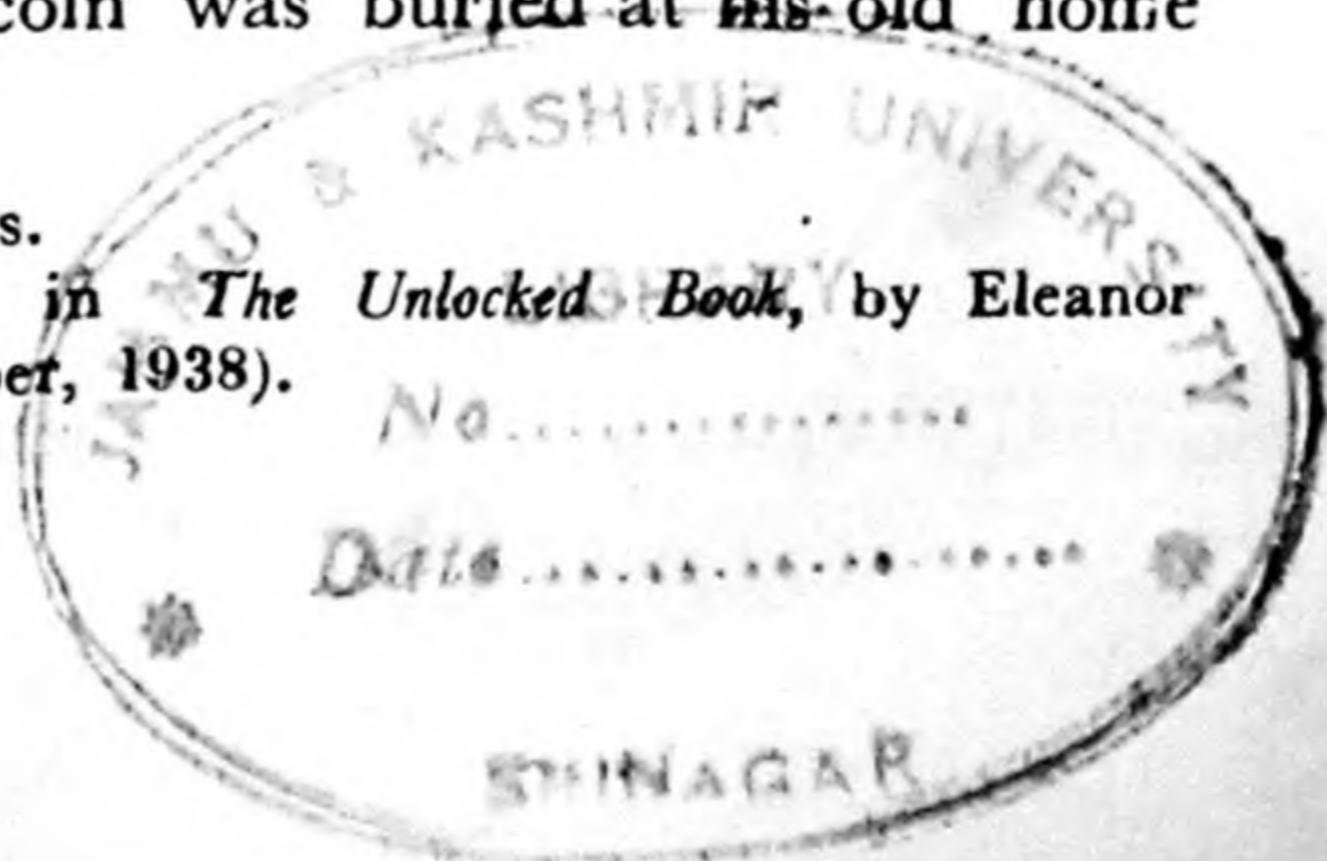
ber what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

79-80. Booth had entered Lincoln's box unobserved, and shot him there. Major Rathbone tried to seize him, but Booth had a knife as well and struck at the officer with it. He jumped from the box to the stage, catching a spur in the flags decorating Lincoln's box, and fell, breaking the small bone of his leg. But he was not disabled; he shouted out “Sic semper tyrannis”<sup>1</sup> (the motto of Virginia), escaped behind the scenes to the stage door, and leapt on a horse that was waiting for him. Twelve days later he was tracked to a farm in southern Maryland, and shot down by Sergeant Boston Corbett.<sup>2</sup> Lincoln, taken to a house near the theatre, never recovered consciousness, and died shortly after seven the following morning. Stanton, who was watching him, announced the end to the others in the words, “Now he belongs to the ages” (see l. 98).

On May 4, Lincoln was buried at his old home at Springfield.

<sup>1</sup>i.e. So perish all tyrants.

<sup>2</sup>Full details are given in *The Unlocked Book*, by Eleanor Farjeon. (Faber & Faber, 1938).





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